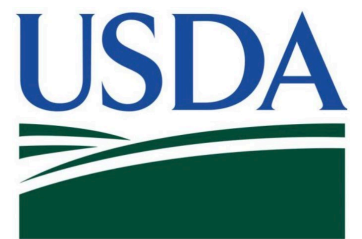


# ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

A Technical Assistance Guide

AUGUST 2022



## Introduction

Providing supportive housing in rural areas presents a significant challenge – one that is being exacerbated by economic distress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rural communities struggle to find adequate, affordable rental units as well as access to the services their most vulnerable tenants need. Both U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offer programs that can address the challenge. This resource will describe resources these rural communities can use to more effectively serve people experiencing homelessness and other vulnerable populations.

## Summary of Programs

USDA and HUD programs offer an array of allocations, grants, and loans to help rural communities offer rental assistance and develop affordable rental housing. A description of these programs is below. Please note this is not an all-inclusive list of affordable housing opportunities, but are the most relevant to rural communities working to address homelessness.

### USDA Rural Development Program – Community Facilities Programs

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities>

USDA finances projects to develop or improve essential public services and facilities in communities across rural America. Projects include the construction of transitional housing facilities that offer rehabilitation or counseling services or housing where the primary intent is to provide health care.

<b>Community Facilities Guaranteed Loans, Direct Loans, and Grants</b>			
Loans and grants can be used for real estate and equipment-type projects, including but not limited to public homeless shelters and senior care facilities			
<b>Applicants</b> Organizations, Tribes	<b>Housing Type</b> Public facilities	<b>Primary Use</b> Construct, enlarge, extend, or otherwise improve essential community facilities	<b>More Information</b> <a href="#">Fact Sheet</a>

## USDA Rural Development Program – Multifamily Housing Programs

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/program-services/multi-family-housing-programs>

USDA provides affordable multifamily rental housing in rural areas by financing projects geared for low-income, elderly, and disabled individuals and families, as well as domestic farm laborers. Grant awards can be found [here](#). Additionally, USDA guarantees loans for affordable rental housing in rural areas and towns.

<b>Rural Rental Housing Direct Loan</b>			
Provides competitive financing for affordable multi-family rental housing for low-income, elderly, or disabled individuals and families in eligible rural areas			
<b>Applicants</b> Organizations, Tribal Members, Tribes	<b>Housing Type</b> Rental housing	<b>Primary Use</b> Recent years no new construction, mainly focused on preservation	<b>More Information</b> <a href="#">Fact Sheet</a>
<b>Multi-Family Housing Loan Guarantees</b>			
The program works with eligible lenders to guarantee loans made to eligible borrowers who are unable to obtain commercial credit without the guarantee			
<b>Applicants</b> Eligible lenders Eligible borrowers include State/local governments, Organizations	<b>Housing Type</b> Rental housing	<b>Primary Use</b> Construction, improvement, and purchase of multi-family rental housing	<b>More Information</b> <a href="#">Fact Sheet</a>
<b>Rental Assistance Program</b>			
Provides payments to owners of USDA-financed Rural Rental Housing or Farm Labor projects on behalf of low-income tenants			
<b>Applicants</b> Eligible project owners	<b>Housing Type</b> Rental subsidy	<b>Primary Use</b> Provide income for the project owner's property while making rent affordable for low-income tenants	<b>More Information</b> <a href="#">Fact Sheet</a>

## HUD Office of Community Planning and Development

[https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning)

The Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) offers communities opportunities to provide decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expand economic opportunities. In rural areas, the State is most likely the recipient of the ESG, CDBG, and HOME allocations. Organizations looking to apply for funding opportunities will need to identify their appropriate state agency administering the programs. HUD Grantees can be found at this [page](#). The table below outlines the relevant CPD programs that can be used in rural communities' efforts to prevent and end homelessness. Additionally, time-limited funding made available through the CARES and American Rescue Plan Acts is listed.

<b>Continuum of Care Program</b>			
Designed to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, and State and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.			
<b>Applicants</b> Nonprofit organizations, State and local governments, instrumentalities of local governments, and public housing agencies	<b>Housing Type</b> Rental and transitional housing	<b>Primary Use</b> Permanent housing, transitional housing, supportive services, and Homeless Management Information System	<b>More Information</b> <a href="#">Website</a>
<b>Emergency Solutions Grants</b>			
Addresses the housing need of individuals and families by assisting to quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness			
<b>Applicants</b> Formula funding to Territories, States, Metropolitan Cities, and Urban Counties	<b>Housing Type</b> Rental housing, emergency shelter	<b>Primary Use</b> Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Rapid Rehousing, Homelessness Prevention, and Homeless Management Information System	<b>More Information</b> <a href="#">Website</a>

CARES Act made available \$4 billion on a formula basis to supplement Emergency Solutions Grants funding (ESG-CV). Funding is made available until September 30, 2022. For more information ESG-CV go to: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/esg/esg-cv/#program-requirements>.

**Community Development Block Grant Program**

Supports community development activities to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expand economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income people

<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Housing Type</b>	<b>Primary Use</b>	<b>More Information</b>
Entitled Cities and Counties, States	Rental assistance, Rental housing, Homeownership, Public facilities	ServicesPublic Facilities, Public Improvement, Housing Rehabilitation, Economic Development, Public Services and more	<a href="#">Website</a>

CARES Act made available \$5 billion to supplement CDBG to prepare for, prevent, and respond to coronavirus (CDBG-CV). Funding is made available for a 6-year period of performance. For more information on CDBG-CV go to: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/cdbg-cv/>.

**HOME Investment Partnerships Program**

Provides formula grants to fund a wide range of activities including building, buying, and/or rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or homeownership or providing direct rental assistance to low-income people

<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Housing Type</b>	<b>Primary Use</b>	<b>More Information</b>
State and eligible local participating jurisdictions	Rental housing, Rental assistance	Production and preservation of affordable housing for rent or ownership, Tenant-Based Rental Assistance	<a href="#">Website</a>

American Rescue Plan Act made available \$5 billion under the HOME program to assist individuals or households who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, and other vulnerable populations. Activities include Production and preservation of affordable housing; Tenant-Based Rental Assistance; Supportive Services, Homeless Prevention Services, and Housing Counseling; Non-congregate shelter. For more information on HOME ARP go to: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/home-arp/>.

### Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS

Program dedicated to the housing needs of low-income people living with HIV/AIDS

<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Housing Type</b>	<b>Primary Use</b>	<b>More Information</b>
Nonprofit organizations, States, cities, and units of general local government	Rental housing, Rental assistance, Emergency shelter	Rental assistance; short-term payments to prevent homelessness; facility operations costs; leasing; acquisition, rehabilitation, and construction	<a href="#">Website</a>

*CARES Act made available \$65 million in supplemental HOPWA funds to HOPWA grantees as additional funding to maintain operations and for rental assistance, supportive services, and other necessary actions, in order to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus. For more information on HOPWA-CV, go to: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hopwa/covid-19/#resources-and-guidance>.*

### HUD Office of Public and Indian Housing

[https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing)

The Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) ensures safe, decent, and affordable housing exists through the creation of affordable rental housing opportunities. PIH offers several opportunities for CoCs to connect with to address homelessness in rural communities. Public Housing Agencies’ contacts can be found [here](#). The table below outlines relevant opportunities. In addition to the opportunities listed below, Public Housing Agencies also provide multi-family programs that are project-based and serve very-low income, disabled, and elderly households.

### Housing Choice Vouchers

Provides a housing subsidy paid directly to private landlords on behalf of very-low and extremely-low income families, the elderly, and the disabled. Special purpose vouchers are available through the Housing Choice Voucher program to support many vulnerable populations. Special purpose vouchers include:

- [HUD-VA Supportive Housing \(HUD-VASH\)](#)
- [Nonelderly Disabled \(NED\)](#)
- [Mainstream Vouchers](#)
- [Family Unification Program \(FUP\)](#)
- [Foster Youth to Independence Initiative \(FYI\)](#)

<b>Applicants</b> Public Housing Agencies	<b>Housing Type</b> Rental assistance	<b>Primary Use</b> Rental subsidy to ensure households have long-term access to high-quality, healthy and safe housing	<b>More Information</b> <a href="#">Website</a>
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### Public Housing

Provides various types of decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities

<b>Applicants</b> Public Housing Agencies	<b>Housing Type</b> Rental housing	<b>Primary Use</b> Affordable housing unit to provide decent and safe rental housing	<b>More Information</b> <a href="#">Website</a>
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### Section 202 Supportive Housing

Provides capital advances for supportive housing for very low-income elderly persons, including the frail elderly, and provides rent subsidies for the projects to help make them affordable

<b>Applicants</b> Nonprofit organizations, nonprofit consumer cooperatives	<b>Housing Type</b> Rental housing	<b>Primary Use</b> Construction, rehabilitation, or acquisition with or without rehabilitation, and operating subsidies	<b>More Information</b> <a href="#">Website</a>
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### Section 811 Supportive Housing

Provides funding to develop and subsidize rental housing with the availability of supportive services for very low- and extremely low-income adults with disabilities.

<b>Applicants</b> Nonprofit organizations, State housing agencies	<b>Housing Type</b> Rental housing	<b>Primary Use</b> Capital advances for development, project rental assistance	<b>More Information</b> <a href="#">Website</a>
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### Emergency Housing Vouchers

70,000 housing choice vouchers were made available through the American Rescue Plan Act to serve individuals and families 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. Public Housing Agencies must coordinate with Continuums of Care to receive eligible households.

<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Housing Type</b>	<b>Primary Use</b>	<b>More Information</b>
Public Housing Agencies	Rental assistance	Rental subsidy to provide long-term affordable housing to homeless or at-risk households	<a href="#">Website</a>

### Indian Housing Block Grant Program

A formula grant that provides a range of affordable housing activities on Indian reservations and Indian areas

<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Housing Type</b>	<b>Primary Use</b>	<b>More Information</b>
Federally recognized Indian tribes or their tribally designated housing entity	Range of housing types	A wide variety of affordable housing activities, including development, housing services, and operating assistance	<a href="#">Website</a>

### Indian Community Development Block Grant Program

Provides direct grants for use in developing viable Indian and Alaska Native Communities, including decent housing, a suitable living environment, and economic opportunities, primarily for low and moderate income persons

<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Housing Type</b>	<b>Primary Use</b>	<b>More Information</b>
Indian tribe, band, group, nation, or Alaska Native village; tribal organizations	Range of housing types, community facilities	Acquisition, rehabilitation, and new construction; community facilities; economic development	<a href="#">Website</a>



## Crosswalk to Rural Resources to Address Homelessness

The crosswalk below details the ways in which HUD and USDA programs intersect and compliment one another. This list is not exhaustive, but meant to give the reader a basic overview of eligible costs:

Funding Source	ELIGIBLE COSTS							
	Acquisition	Construction/ Rehab	Outreach	Leasing of Units	Rental Assistance	Facilities	Operations	Support Services
<b>USDA</b>								
Community Facilities Loans & Grants		✓				✓		
Rental Housing Loans Rental Assistance	✓	✓			✓			
<b>HUD CPD</b>								
CoC	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
ESG/ ESG-CV	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
CDBG/ CDBG-CV	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
HOME-ARP	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
HOPWA	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>HUD PIH</b>								
HCV/EHV					✓			
Public Housing				✓				
202/811	✓	✓		✓			✓	
IHGBP	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
ICDBGP	✓	✓						

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Recognizing the above programs intersect to cover project costs where resources are often unavailable or insufficient to meet the needs of intended beneficiaries, organizations will probably want to learn more. A few questions are answered below that enable quick access to complete details from both the USDA and HUD websites.

1. *How can a rural community plan a project in a pandemic?*

The range of strategies and activities that communities need to implement can be overwhelming. Communities should work together to bring relevant partners to the table, including those with lived experience, to develop a plan that identifies how to quickly return households to permanent housing and slow the spread of COVID-19 through prevention and housing stability. Investment planning with local and state health, governmental, and nonprofit organizations can help communities bring the necessary resources to bear. HUD has provided a document explaining how to maximize federal resources. Access [Make the Most of Federal Resources to Stop Increases in Homelessness](#).

2. *Where is more information available about USDA funding and in what locations it can be used?*

The USDA Rural Development [State Offices](#) can identify eligible areas.

3. *How can I find the Continuum of Care serving my geographic area?*

A list of Continuum of Care grantees can be found [here](#).

4. *What funding is available to communities during the pandemic to rehouse vulnerable populations?*

Allocations for relevant programs are linked below.  
[CARES Act Formula Grants](#) (ESG-CV, CDBG-CV, and HOPWA)  
[HOME-American Rescue Plan](#) (HOME-ARP)

5. *Where can I get more information on strategies to address rural homelessness?*

For strategies to end homelessness in rural America, see [All Routes Home](#).

6. *Where can I get more information on the response to COVID-19?*

For HUD’s rehousing efforts and strategies, see [Disease Risks and Homelessness](#).  
For more information on USDA’s response and available resources, see [Rural Development COVID-19 Response](#)

## Glossary

Key terms for use of this Guide include:

- *Beneficiaries*: those persons or households who are targeted to receive either housing or services under a plan or program.
- *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)* – an economic stimulus bill intended to address the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S. and provide funding to prepare for, prevent, and respond to COVID-19
- *Continuum of Care* – a local planning body responsible for coordinating the full range of homelessness services in a geographic area, which may cover a city, county, metropolitan area, or an entire state
- *Homeless* - a person who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
- *Method of Distribution* – a policy or practice for awarding funds across widespread geographies to support housing, services or other development activity
- *Multifamily Housing* - a structure with five or more dwelling units which usually takes the form of one or more buildings
- *Rental Housing* – permanent housing that is made affordable through construction, rehabilitation, rental assistance, or operating subsidies.
- *Program Participants* – a term used in some HUD programs to describe the beneficiaries of the program’s assistance. This term is synonymous with “beneficiaries” under the USDA programs.

- *Rural Supportive Housing* - a housing model situated outside urbanized areas which combines subsidized or affordable housing options with access to a range of coordinated health and human services
- *Vulnerable Populations* - include the economically disadvantaged, racial and ethnic minorities, the uninsured, low-income children, the elderly, people experiencing homelessness, those with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and those with other chronic health conditions, including severe mental illness

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