

PRESS RELEASE



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HABC Issues 278 Emergency Housing Vouchers

City and Housing Authority work closely to alleviate homelessness in Baltimore

(BALTIMORE | June 1, 2022) – The Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC), working collaboratively with Baltimore’s Continuum of Care (CoC) and the Mayor’s Office of Homeless Services (MOHS), has issued all 278 Emergency Housing Vouchers allocated last June to alleviate homelessness.

Funding for the specially designated vouchers and related services, \$3.1 million, came from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and were the result of the American Rescue Plan Act.

“The 278 households receiving these vouchers are among the most vulnerable in our city,” said HABC President and CEO Janet Abrahams. “We are grateful to HUD for recognizing the dire conditions in which these and other Baltimore residents live. We also appreciate Mayor Scott’s administration for vetting and referring the applicants to us. It required a cohesive, joint effort to help move these individuals and families into permanent homes. The success of these efforts is gratifying to all of us.”

The largest category receiving vouchers, nearly 100, were individuals living on the street or in a shelter. Families followed next with 80. The vouchers were specifically targeted to assist people in four categories: (1) homeless; (2) at risk of homelessness; (3) fleeing domestic or other kinds of violence; and (4) recently homeless.

These vouchers work in the same way HABC’s regular Housing Choice Vouchers work. A household pays 30% of its income toward rent and the voucher covers the remainder. Because these are very low-income households, the portion of rent they pay will be extremely low.

“Access to housing is critical in ending homelessness and the Emergency Housing Vouchers provided this access for our most vulnerable neighbors in the mist of a public health crisis,” said Irene Agustin, Director of MOHS. “Partnerships, like this one between the CoC, MOHS, and HABC, are the type of collaborative effort needed to end homelessness in Baltimore.”

“The Continuum of Care applauds the efforts of the individuals, organizations and systems who worked together to achieve this milestone for Baltimore,” said Janice Miller, chair of the CoC.

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HUD included additional funding to overcome barriers to finding and leasing a unit. For example, HABC is helping these clients with their housing search, security and utility deposits, and application fees. HABC in some cases is also helping with moving expenses, furniture and when needed, preparing homeless residents for the obligations of managing their apartment or house.

About 200 of the recipients have found and leased houses or apartments to date as the remainder continue to work closely with case managers to find appropriate accommodations.

A possibility exists that HUD could award HABC additional emergency housing vouchers because some housing authorities have failed to use the number sent to them, and so HUD is reallocating the unused vouchers to housing agencies that used their allocation efficiently. HABC has not yet been notified whether it will receive more vouchers and if so, how many.

“There are more people out there desperate for this kind of help, so we would certainly accept more if HUD chooses to reallocate them to us,” Abrahams said. We have landlords committed to doing business with us and providing the needed units for our clients.”

Households on HABC’s regular waiting list are not eligible for these emergency vouchers.

About HABC

HABC is the fifth largest public housing authority in the U.S., providing quality affordable housing for more than 23,000 households. The agency creates diverse and vibrant communities, provides opportunities for self-sufficiency, and builds pathways for strong partnerships. #bmoreHABC