

Santa Clara County Housing Authority Urges Adoption of Build Back Better Plan's Historic Expansion to Housing Voucher Supply

SAN JOSE, Calif. — October 25, 2021 — The Santa Clara County Housing Authority (SCCHA) strongly supports retaining the housing funding levels in the Build Back Better Act, a 10-year social infrastructure bill. SCCHA applauds Santa Clara County's congressional delegation for its unanimous support of the federal housing priorities in this bill that, if enacted, would have an enormous and historic impact on advancing racial equity and improving the health, education and wealth outcomes for families and individuals with the lowest incomes throughout the country and in our county.

As negotiations continue, it is critical that any cuts made to the overall package do not come at the expense of affordable, accessible homes for our county's most marginalized and lowest-income people, including seniors, people with disabilities and families with children. Despite the clear need, three in four households eligible for assistance receive none because Congress continues to underfund proven solutions, including rental assistance vouchers as well as preserving and helping to build more homes affordable to the lowest-income earners. Moreover, the shortage of affordable homes disproportionately harms Black, Latino and other marginalized people who, because of structural racism in housing and other sectors, are more likely to have extremely low incomes, be severely cost burdened, face eviction and experience homelessness.

The Housing Authority urges Congress to retain the Build Back Better plan's original appropriation of \$90 billion—including \$75 billion for housing vouchers and \$15 billion for project-based rental assistance—to expand rental assistance to 1 million additional households nationwide through 2031.

Since January 2020, Santa Clara County's supportive housing system has connected almost 5,000 people with permanent homes. The county's collective efforts are working: fewer people are falling into homelessness, we have more temporary housing options and together we're leveraging new sources of local, state and federal funding to overcome homelessness.

Yet our county's ability to help house its most vulnerable residents is limited by the funds allocated by Congress for our federal housing programs. Over the 20-year period from 2001 to 2021, SCCHA's baseline of housing vouchers has only increased by 1,484 vouchers. While our agency currently assists over 19,000 households with our voucher programs, there are thousands more households countywide who are eligible to receive housing assistance. On any given night in Santa Clara County, there are still 10,000 people experiencing homelessness and 20,000 people at risk of homelessness, despite our community's success in housing 17,340 individuals since 2015.

Federal housing vouchers enable eligible low-income people to rent homes through the private market and, when tied to specific apartment units, are integral to financing the construction of new affordable homes and ensuring that the lowest income people aren't priced out of the new homes built with those funds. The Build Back Better plan's rental assistance expansion provides SCCHA and its community partners an unprecedented opportunity to reduce and prevent further homelessness and to ensure that thousands of vulnerable households have access to safe, stable homes throughout the county.

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About SCCHA

SCCHA is the largest provider of affordable housing assistance in Santa Clara County, helping make rental housing safe and affordable for low-income families through Section 8 voucher programs and below-market rental properties. Designated a Moving to Work agency by Congress, it currently assists more than 19,000 households through innovative policies for the delivery of assisted housing. For more information, visit www.scchousingauthority.org.

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