

# The Dallas Morning News

## OPINION / COMMENTARY

**A major tool against homelessness is at risk**

**Without emergency vouchers, people will be back on the streets.**

**By Robert Weiner and Coby Rinke**

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**Frank, a homeless man, sits in his tent with a river view, June 5, 2021, in Portland, Ore.**

**(Paula Bronstein / AP)**

Over the past four years, homelessness has been [declining](#) in Dallas, even as it has [skyrocketed](#) nationwide. Unfortunately, at the same time this positive trend is occurring, Texas' congressional representatives are allowing a federal housing program to die, potentially [causing 60,000 Americans to lose their housing](#).

The federal government's [Emergency Housing Vouchers](#) (EHV) program, created in 2021 as part of the American Rescue Plan, is projected to run out of money by next year, if Congress does not renew its funding. The program currently aids Americans who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness, as well as victims of domestic violence or human trafficking.

The end of the program would hit Dallas particularly hard. Texas [ranks 5th in the nation](#) for total homelessness, and Dallas is the city with the [most homeless](#) residents in Texas, outpacing San Antonio and Houston. Texas also [receives](#) the third most EHV funding out of any state proportional to its homeless population. The greater Dallas-Fort Worth area specifically received at least [1,100 vouchers](#), [almost \\$5 million](#) worth of that funding. That's almost a quarter of the total [2022 homeless population](#) of 4,410.

The positive impacts of the EHV program are easy to see in Dallas. This newspaper [cited](#) the EHV program as a part of “new strategies and dollars [that] offer a chance to reduce homelessness.” Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development partially [attributed](#) a 3.8% decrease in homelessness between 2022 and 2023 to the EHV program.

However, if politicians allow the program to end, it threatens to reverse all that progress and put thousands of Dallas residents back onto the streets. The harmful effects would be immediate for residents, city social services and, most importantly, for those evicted from their housing.

Lawmakers of both parties have become [increasingly focused](#) on the housing crisis. Last year, Gov. Greg Abbott [announced a \\$95 million plan](#) to build new housing, underscoring how important the housing crisis is for Texans, and the growing bipartisan support for addressing it. Yet, many seem all too willing to let the EHV program die.

If Texas representatives in Congress care whether their constituents have some place to live, they should vote to continue funding the program. [The six representatives from Texas](#) on the House Appropriations Committee, which would likely draft the bill to continue funding the EHV program, have a particular responsibility to act. Doing so is not just the morally right choice; it's also good politics. The housing crisis was one of the top issues in the 2024 presidential election, demonstrating how deeply Americans care about it.

It is true that the EHV program is not a permanent solution, and some people who have received EHV's [have not been able to make use of their vouchers](#) due to the scarcity in the housing market. However, the program is an essential temporary measure to keep Dallas residents off the streets while new housing is built.

Failing to renew the Emergency Housing Voucher program (4,536 Texans [received](#) vouchers including over 1,100 to Dallas) would be a betrayal of the thousands of Texans who've begun to rebuild their lives because of it. Letting such vital progress slip away would be both a moral and economic failure. Whether that future comes to pass is now in the hands of Texas lawmakers.

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