



Public Housing Timeline, 1933–1993

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- 1933:** Creation of the Public Works Administration's Emergency Housing Corporation as part of the National Recovery Act. The program authorizes the federal government to clear slums and to construct low-income housing.
- 1934:** The National Housing Act of 1934 establishes the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to back long-term, self-amortizing mortgages and to offer federal mortgage insurance.
- 1937:** Passage of the Housing Act of 1937 (Wagner-Steagall). The Act establishes the United States Housing Authority (USHA), which offers loans and subsidies to local housing agencies for the construction of public housing projects.
- 1940:** The Defense Housing and Community Facilities and Services Act (Lanham Act) authorizes the use of federal public housing funds for defense industry workers.
- 1944:** The Servicemen's Readjustment Act (G.I. Bill) provides mortgage loan guarantees for home purchases by veterans as well as funds for higher education.
- 1947:** Congress establishes the Housing and Home Finance Agency to consolidate and oversee most federal housing programs, including public housing.
- 1949:** Passage of the Housing Act of 1949 (Taft-Wagner-Ellender), authorizing slum clearance, funds for the FHA, and the construction of 810,000 public housing units.
- 1954:** The Housing Act of 1954 sets new targets for public housing and jump starts the urban renewal program.
- 1956:** The federal government commits to the expansion of public housing for the elderly with the Housing Act of 1956 and creates a pool of relocation funds for people displaced by urban renewal.
- 1959:** Section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959 provides direct loans for the first time to nonprofit groups for the construction of low-income elderly housing.
- 1961:** The Housing Act of this year authorizes the FHA to insure mortgages for privately owned low-income rental housing.
- 1965:** Congress establishes the Department of Housing and Urban Development as a cabinet-level agency.
- 1966:** As part of President Johnson's Great Society, Congress creates the Model Cities program to target federal funds and programs toward local government planning efforts in distressed cities.
- 1968:** Under Section 235, the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 creates a program to spur low-income homeownership through FHA-insured private housing construction and rehabilitation. The program suffers from massive fraud, costing taxpayers billions of dollars.
- 1969:** The Brooke Amendment limits the rent paid by public housing tenants to 25% of their income (later raised to 30%), necessitating an increase in federal annual subsidies to public housing authorities.
- 1970:** As a predecessor to Section 8, the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970 establishes the Experimental Housing Allowance Program to subsidize the rents of low-income tenants in privately owned buildings.
- 1973:** President Nixon places a moratorium on all new conventional public housing projects except those devoted to elderly residency.
- 1974:** The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 consolidates various U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding streams into the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The Act also establishes the Section 8 housing programs.
- 1976:** U.S. Supreme Court issues decision in *Hills v. Gautreaux*. The court ruled unanimously that HUD contributed to racial segregation in Chicago through discriminatory practices and could be held liable. A consent decree eventually led to relief payments to 25,000 people.
- 1977:** After a long fight, housing activists push Congress to pass the Community Reinvestment Act, which requires banks to report their lending practices in neighborhoods where they gather deposits.
- 1983:** The Housing and Urban-Rural Recovery Act introduces the Section 8 voucher program, which provides tenants with rental subsidies that are more flexible and portable than the original Section 8 certificates.
- 1986:** Congress authorizes the Low Income Housing Tax Credit to spur the construction and rehabilitation of low-income housing.
- 1993:** Congress authorizes the Urban Revitalization Demonstration Program, or HOPE VI, to provide public housing revitalization grants to local governments. The program seeks to replace high-rise public housing projects with low-rise, mixed-income housing. HOPE VI is ongoing.