Security deposit and first month’s rent assistance overview

Some low-income households lack the accumulated savings needed to cover a security deposit and any required prepaid rent, such as first and last month’s rent. These obstacles may make it difficult for homeless households or individuals seeking to escape domestic violence to access rental housing or for households to move to a better unit or a neighborhood offering better schools or other desired features.

An inability to afford a security deposit and prepaid rent may also leave households that receive a housing choice voucher unable to use their voucher to rent a unit in their preferred neighborhood, or even to use the voucher at all. Some jurisdictions offer financial assistance to help cover these costs, as grants paid directly to the landlord or as low- or no-interest loans that the tenant must repay. In some cases, assistance also helps to cover utility start-up costs or other expenses associated with a new home. Recipients may also be eligible to receive additional supportive services and case management.