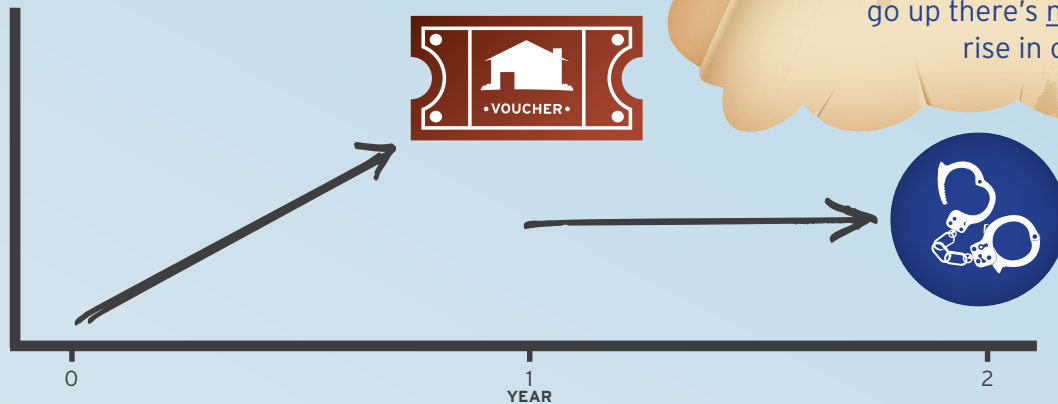


# The Answer

SHELTERFORCE

**Q:** Do Section 8 voucher holders increase crime in a neighborhood?

**A:** No!



**THIS IS A PERENNIAL FEAR**, but researchers at NYU's Furman Center\* took a really close look at the data to see, when controlling for other factors, if there was any association between an increase in Housing Choice Vouchers\*\* (formerly known as Section 8 vouchers) and the crime levels in that neighborhood.

**They found no association.** An increase in voucher holders does not lead to any increase in crime.

What they did find is that it actually works the other way: an increase in crime predicts an increase in voucher holders the next year, though the effect is quite small—six more incidents of crime one year can be expected to lead to one additional voucher-holding resident the next year.

Voucher holders often have trouble finding landlords willing to rent to them or places that are affordable to them even with the voucher. Crime increases can lower property values and decrease housing demand among those with more choices. Could this be the connection?

Whatever the reason, the data shows the answer is no, households with vouchers moving in won't increase crime. But those households are nonetheless more likely to be living near, and suffering from, crime.



For some suggestions on how to change the voucher program so that voucher holders are not pushed into high-crime areas, see [www.nhi.org/go/VoucherPolicy](http://www.nhi.org/go/VoucherPolicy).

\*Based on the statistical correlations between crime and voucher holders determined in "American Murder Mystery Revisited: Do Housing Voucher Households Cause Crime?" by Ingrid Gould Ellen, Michael C. Lens, and Katherine M. O'Regan, December 14, 2011, NYU Wagner Research Paper No. 2012-02. [www.nhi.org/go/NYUVoucherStudy](http://www.nhi.org/go/NYUVoucherStudy)

\*\*Housing Choice Vouchers cover the difference between a "fair market rent" and 30 percent of an eligible low-income family's income in privately-owned housing. It is a federal program, administered by local housing authorities, and there are only enough to assist fewer than one-quarter of the families that are eligible for them.

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