Communities where some renters use housing choice vouchers, or Section 8 vouchers as they're more commonly known as, have worried fellow residents that it may result in a crime spurt and drop the property values. However, a new study debunks that myth.

The report, "Investigating the Relationship between Housing Voucher Use and Crime," includes the results of NYU's Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy and Moelis Institute for Affordable Housing Policy which tested the commonly held belief that an increase in households using vouchers in a neighborhood leads to a rise in crime.

Using housing voucher and crime data from 10 large American cities, including Austin, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Indianapolis, New York, Philadelphia, Portland, Seattle, and Washington, DC., researchers examined how neighborhood crime levels changed after an increase or decrease in the number of households using vouchers.
The study found that while crime is higher in areas in which more households use vouchers, these elevated crime levels existed prior to the influx of households using vouchers, discrediting speculation that households with vouchers cause crime in a neighborhood to increase, according to a statement.

"Despite the lack of rigorous research to support the claim that housing voucher recipients cause crime to increase, this misconception has fueled fear and community resistance," said Ingrid Gould Ellen, faculty co-director of the Furman Center and co-author of the study.