

April 16, 2021

The Honorable David E. Price  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and  
Urban Development, and Related Agencies  
2358-A RHOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies  
1036 LHOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**RE: Support the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grant Programs**

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations bill, we strongly urge you to support the Department of Housing and Urban Development's McKinney Vento's (HUD) Homeless Assistance Grants (HAG) programs at a level of \$3.3 billion.

A longstanding, nationwide shortage of affordable housing leaves millions of Americans at risk of homelessness and causes too many families and individuals to fall into homelessness. However, the HAG Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) programs are successfully used by state and local governments, as well as an extensive network of providers of shelter and housing services in hundreds of American communities, to reduce homelessness.

The CoC and ESG programs help to fund services to people experiencing and at risk of homelessness, whether by non-profits, community action programs, faith-based groups, government agencies, or other providers. Among the activities supported by the CoC and ESG programs are the development and operation of shelters, outreach efforts to identify unsheltered homeless families and individuals and to induce them to come inside, rapid re-housing (RRH), permanent supportive housing (PSH), and homelessness prevention.

RRH emphasizes housing search and relocation services and short- and medium-term rental assistance to move homeless families and individuals (with or without a disability) as rapidly as possible into permanent housing. PSH is housing assistance paired with supportive services to assist homeless persons with a disability or families with an adult or child member with a disability achieve housing stability.

According to the most recent Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, released in December 2019, there are an estimated 567,715 people experiencing homelessness on any given night in the United States. This includes 171,670 people in families (including children) and 96,141 chronically homeless individuals. This is likely an undercount and because of COVID-19, there will not be a traditional count in 2021 of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

However, there's no question that homelessness has worsened because of the health and economic consequences of the pandemic. Even with moratoria on evictions in place, there have nevertheless been numerous evictions of households that have experienced job loss or loss of income.

Although the COVID relief funding provided by Congress has been immensely helpful to the homelessness system in addressing the consequences of the pandemic, it cannot address the consequences of historically underfunding that system, notwithstanding the best efforts of the House and Senate THUD appropriations subcommittees. This extraordinary public health crisis has demonstrated the most significant problems in the homelessness system as it is currently funded: the unacceptably high numbers of unsheltered families and individuals and the agonizingly slow rate of moving families and individuals from shelters into permanent housing. In fact, many communities regularly exhaust their years' worth of CoC funds just to meet existing obligations for PSH and are unable to make those same arrangements for the new, higher needs of homeless families and individuals. Many communities also fear what will happen when the COVID relief funding expires.

Without stable homes, children and youth face challenges in school, families struggle to maintain employment, and those fighting physical health, mental health, and substance abuse issues lack the support to adequately address their problems. Because homelessness leads many people to cycle through costly emergency systems and shorten life expectancy, it is simply good public policy to expend resources towards helping people secure stable housing.

Ultimately, we know how to reduce homelessness, we just need to resource the effort accordingly.

Therefore, we ask that you provide at least \$3.3 billion for HUD's McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Grants programs in FY22.

Thank you for considering this important request and for your continuing leadership in helping to prevent and end homelessness in the United States.

Sincerely,

Gwen S. Moore

Member of Congress

John Katko

Member of Congress