

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

Dear Chair Schatz and Ranking Member Collins:

As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill, we urge your continued support for the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) homeless assistance programs. Specifically, we urge you to provide, consistent with President Biden's budget request, 1) at least \$3.6 billion for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants (HAG), 2) at least \$32.1 billion for Tenant-Based "Section 8" Rental Assistance (TBRA), and 3) robust funding for HUD's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program.

As COVID-19-related emergency housing assistance programs draw to a close, it is crucial not only that we take proactive measures to avoid a sudden increase in unhoused Americans but also that we address the persistent issues impacting unhoused Americans. The dramatic rise in housing costs for low-income people across the country has unsurprisingly caused a rise in the number of people experiencing homelessness. According to HUD's 2021 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, on a single night in 2021, 326,000 people were experiencing sheltered homelessness in the United States.

Robust funding for HAG and TBRA must be a priority to ensure that all individuals and families who are at risk of homelessness have a safe place to live through the pandemic recovery and beyond. Connecting people back to a home as quickly as possible with essential wraparound services is the best way to put them on a path to permanent housing. Ensuring "Housing First," a concept first adopted by the George W. Bush Administration, helps communities avoid costs associated with homelessness, including law enforcement, emergency health care, and corrections costs. By robustly funding the fight against homelessness, Congress would also help address the disproportionate impact of homelessness on minorities as a result of racial discrimination.

We must also maintain our long-standing investment in HUD-VASH, which assists veterans who are homeless and their families in finding and sustaining permanent housing. Unfortunately, veterans, including those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, continue to be at high risk of homelessness due to their elevated incidence of mental and physical injuries. We must do all that we can to ensure that those who have bravely served our country do not then find themselves without a home.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests and we look forward to working with you on the FY 2023 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,