

MESSAGING GUIDANCE: EXECUTIVE ACTIONS BY THE ADMINISTRATION

Top Line Messaging

- The federal government has an essential role in ensuring that the most vulnerable Americans have a social safety net that meets their most basic needs, including housing. We need Congress to push back against this Administration's demonstrated effort to abdicate that responsibility.
- We are grateful to the bipartisan efforts of this Congress to reject the harmful and reckless proposals put forth by the President in his FY2026 Budget Request.
- **FY2025 COC PROGRAM COMPETITION.** Recently, HUD indicated its intention to administer a new competition for FY2025 CoC Program funding. Retracting their prior commitment in the middle of an established funding cycle would create an undue burden on CoCs and the programs that serve people experiencing homelessness in their communities.
- **EXECUTIVE ORDER ON HOMELESSNESS.** On July 24, the White House issued a new Executive Order focused on homelessness that would impose a multitude of harmful, ineffective, and outdated policies and practices for addressing homelessness. Collectively, they aim to defund and dismantle the foundations of homeless response in the United States, while retreating from the federal government's essential role in supporting communities across the nation. This would be disastrous.
 - **ATTACKS ON HOUSING FIRST.** Housing First is a thoroughly researched and proven approach to ending people's homelessness by addressing their most essential need first: the need for housing. With housing as a baseline, people are then best able to benefit from quality supportive services, such as healthcare, addiction treatment, and job training. Withdrawing support for Housing First would signal a retreat from demonstrated evidence. It would also unnecessarily upend the daily operations of overstretched providers whose work saves lives every single day. This will cause homelessness to increase.
 - **WE CALL ON CONGRESS TO URGE THE ADMINISTRATION TO INSTEAD:**
 - Follow the model set by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, which widely credits its successful reduction in veteran homelessness to the Housing First approach. This is a clear proof point: when the resources for housing, healthcare, and other supports are sufficiently resourced, Housing First is the most effective and produces the greatest outcomes while also serving people with dignity and compassion.
 - Listen to the experts and "expand the toolbox," rather than force communities to rely on fewer and more expensive, ineffective, and harmful approaches. Communities need more resources for permanent solutions, not more administrative burdens, risks, and barriers to doing life-saving work.

- **A CALL FOR FORCED INSTITUTIONALIZATION.** This Order calls for reversing policies that prevent the forcible and involuntary commitment of people living with mental illness. This defies a 26-year settled legal precedent in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, the Supreme Court case that guarantees people with disabilities have the right to live in the community with necessary support. It is widely understood that community-based care is far more effective in the long run: people are more successful in person-centered, recovery-oriented care provided in their communities.
 - Deinstitutionalization did not cause homelessness, and re-institutionalization will not solve it. We call on Congress to urge the Administration to instead:
 - increase investments in community infrastructure to expand the availability, accessibility, and responsiveness of community-based healthcare options; and
 - expand access to housing and income supports, so that people have a stable foundation.
- **ELIMINATING FUNDAMENTAL PRIVACY PROTECTIONS FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS.** The Executive Order would require recipients of federal funding to collect personal, health-related information to ensure “effective and efficient operations” of funding programs. It would also require recipients to share this data with law enforcement authorities, for the purpose of connecting individuals with medical care or public health resources. This order is a direct violation of privacy laws and would make people experiencing homelessness even more vulnerable to harm.
 - We call on Congress to urge the Administration to instead:
 - Comply with existing privacy laws
 - Recognize that trusting relationships are the foundation of our mission, and that taking liberties with people’s private health data will only erode trust between people experiencing homelessness, the government, healthcare providers, and service providers.

Tailored Messaging

Advocates should work together to develop local- and state-level talking points based on what is happening in your community and state. These could include:

- Regarding the **FY2025 COC PROGRAM COMPETITION**, consider sharing the following:
 - The significant and important role that CoC Program funds have in your community-wide efforts to prevent and end homelessness. Include information on how many people are assisted with these funds each year.
 - The extent of effort that already went into planning for FY2025 CoC Program funds through the two-year planning process.
 - The productive and strategic ways the CoC has planned to use its time, resources, and capacity in calendar year 2025 in lieu of a NOFO for FY2025.
 - How disruptive it would be in your community to hold a new competition at this point in the year. Make HUD aware of the robust, but time consuming, planning and coordination that typically happens throughout the year before the NOFO itself is released.
 - The impact that having grants significantly delayed would have on local efforts to prevent and end homelessness, reminding them that this would be the second consecutive year of delays.

- Regarding the **EXECUTIVE ORDER ON HOMELESSNESS**, consider sharing the following:
 - The impact of Housing First and harm reduction approaches in your district and state.
 - The gaps that exist in your district and state for healthcare overall as well as for services and treatment for people with mental illness and/or substance use disorder.
 - The direct and indirect costs which are associated with punitive approaches to homelessness.
 - The real barriers to housing more people directly from the streets (e.g. a tight affordable housing supply).
 - The challenges that are presented and the harm that is caused by approaches like camping bans and an oversized law enforcement and policing response.
 - If relevant, provide examples of positive partnerships with law enforcement and non-punitive approaches that have been more successful.