



Citygate Network Executive Summary of Briefing with Caitlyn McKenney, HUD, and Dr. Robert Marbut

Date: July 31, 2025

Topic: Executive Order – *Ending Crime and Disorder on America's Streets*

Focus: Policy shift around homelessness, addiction, mental illness, and public safety

Specific Executive Order Audience: HUD, DOJ, HHS leadership

Overall Framing and Intent

- The Executive Order (EO) signals a fundamental shift in federal homelessness policy—from a Housing First and harm-reduction orientation to one centered on treatment, recovery, public safety, and accountability.
- It notifies all political appointees and federal staff that the approach is changing. Implementation will take time (like turning a large ship), but the direction is clear and movement has begun.
- The EO directs federal agencies to act within existing constitutional and statutory limits; it does not create new legal authority or entitlements.

Civil Commitment

- A central focus of the EO is restoring civil commitment processes to address serious mental illness and addiction—especially for individuals who are a danger to themselves, others, or are unable to care for themselves.
- Civil commitment is a legal process that requires judicial authorization, often based on "clear and convincing" evidence. Standards differ by state (e.g., 72-hour mental health holds).
- The EO does not grant new authority—it reinforces existing state and federal law and encourages use of current civil commitment tools.
- Missions and ministries are not expected to drive these processes but may increasingly interact with individuals involved in them.

Enforcement & Local Flexibility

- The EO directs HUD, DOJ, HHS, and DOT to assess and potentially prioritize grants to jurisdictions that:
 - Enforce bans on urban camping, squatting, and open drug use
 - Utilize civil commitment or assisted outpatient treatment pathways
 - Ensure compliance with sex offender registry requirements for individuals with no fixed address
- The call emphasized that the EO is not about criminalizing homelessness, but about equipping localities with a broader set of tools to address public health and safety concerns.
- As discussed on the call, a best practice example includes law enforcement providing "courtesy rides to treatment" instead of jail for non-violent offenses.

Redirecting Federal Funds

- The EO encourages a shift away from harm-reduction strategies (e.g., needle exchange, safe consumption sites) and toward treatment and recovery services.
- HHS and SAMHSA are expected to focus grants on:

- Effective substance use treatment programs
 - Outpatient services and supports before, during, and after civil commitment
- The Helping Up Mission was cited as a model program—clinically grounded, medically informed, and spiritually integrated.

Increased Accountability & Program Reform

- The EO encourages HUD and HHS to revise grant priorities to:
 - End the exclusive prioritization of Housing First programs lacking accountability
 - Emphasize outcome-focused models (e.g., reduced arrests, treatment engagement, long-term stability)
 - Expand access to funding for previously excluded applicants, such as missions and transitional housing providers

Note: While not confirmed policy, the call indicated that reforms could open pathways for missions offering recovery-oriented services to compete for federal funds.

- The 2025 Continuum of Care (CoC) competition will reflect these priorities. Missions should engage with their local CoCs or explore solo application options.

Civil Liberties & Safeguards

- The EO does not override any constitutional or statutory rights.
- All agency actions under this EO must conform to existing law and due process protections.
- Guardrails are in place to prevent overreach or misuse, and a balance between care and civil liberties was emphasized on the call.

Faith-Based Organizations

- Federal funding will remain faith-neutral: Ministries do not need to secularize language or practices to receive funds.
- There are no federal-level restrictions on faith-based hiring, though local jurisdictions may impose limitations.
- Programs must still demonstrate effectiveness through measurable outcomes.

What to Watch / Next Steps

- Ministries should monitor updates to HUD grant programs, including:
 - 2025 CoC Competition (standard and CoC Builds)
 - Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) expansion (\$4B proposed in FY2026)
 - New eligibility categories: Supportive Services Only (SSO), Transitional Housing, and other service-enriched housing types
- Register for HUD listservs to stay informed about funding opportunities and program redefinitions.
- Expect a shift from output metrics (e.g., bed nights) to outcome metrics (e.g., sustained sobriety, stability, reduced recidivism).

Closing Remarks from the Call

- **Caitlyn McKenney:** HUD leadership is paying attention to missions and faith-based providers. "We are learning from you; your work is fundamental to the direction we want to shift toward."

- **Dr. Robert Marbut:** “Lean into this moment—this administration is more open to us than ever before.” Missions should apply for funding and awards, positioning themselves as leaders in treatment and transformation.

Final Takeaways

Area	Shift	Opportunity
Policy Direction	From harm reduction/Housing First → treatment, recovery, safety	Missions/ministries offering recovery-oriented services may gain new funding access
Civil Commitment	Expanded support and legal reinforcement	Understand local laws and prepare to engage with civil commitment referrals
Funding Access	Faith-based and transitional models prioritized	Engage CoCs or explore solo application paths
Accountability	Outcomes (not just bed counts) will drive funding	Track long-term progress: sobriety, stability, reentry success
Legal Protections	EO constrained by law	Balance compassion with public safety while guarding civil liberties