

Top FY 2011 Priorities for Ending Homelessness: Talking Points

January 2011

Please use the talking points below as a guide for contacting your Members of Congress and urging them to ensure that any final fiscal year (FY) 2011 funding bill include at least:

- *\$2.2 billion for HUD's McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants program;*
- *10,000 new HUD-VASH vouchers;*
- *10,000 new housing vouchers under the Housing and Services for Homeless Persons Demonstration; and*
- *\$126 million for Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs.*

NOTE: These are suggested talking points only. Please modify, adapt, or expand upon any of these points as appropriate for your community and your organization. If possible, also tailor your message to your Member's specific interests or philosophy. See "Key Messages for New Congress" for suggestions, or contact Amanda Krusemark at the Alliance at akrusemark@naeh.org for assistance.

- As you consider a final FY 2011 funding bill, please remember the impact it will have on the most vulnerable Americans – people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in our community.
- **Effectiveness.** There are several key federal programs that have repeatedly been proven effective at preventing and ending homelessness for families, veterans, individuals, youth, and children.
- **Need.** Due to increased need and reduced state budgets in light of the recession, hardworking families with children and others are now facing increased risk of homelessness, and federal resources to solve the problem are needed now more than ever.
- **Bipartisan support.** Over the last decade, congresses and administrations from both parties have made preventing and ending homelessness a top priority, and we need to continue those efforts, not bring them to a halt.
 - The Bush Administration and republican congresses committed to ending chronic homelessness.
 - The Obama Administration released the first-ever Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in conjunction with key legislation passed by democratic congresses.
- **Permanent supportive housing.** There are several key federal programs for providing cost-effective permanent housing coupled with the necessary supportive services for veterans and chronically homeless individuals.
 - HUD's McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Grants program has been a key reason that chronic homelessness fell by about one-third in the last several years.
 - *Talk about the success of local McKinney-funded permanent supportive housing and local declines in chronic homelessness.*

- The joint HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program implements this proven model of coupling housing with services for homeless, disabled veterans. This program has received very strong bipartisan support, and failing to provide 10,000 additional HUD-VASH vouchers would deal a crushing blow to VA Secretary Shinseki's goal of ending veteran homelessness in five years.
 - *Talk about the success of local HUD-VASH vouchers and the high need among veterans in your community.*
 - The proposed Housing and Services for Homeless Persons Demonstration would couple rental assistance from HUD with substance use, mental health, Medicaid, TANF, and Department of Education resources. This demonstration has the potential to promote the type of cross-agency partnerships that Members of Congress have been demanding on a bipartisan basis for over a decade.
 - *Discuss the local need for improved coordination of housing and services resources.*
- **Rapid Re-Housing and Prevention.** The 2009 reauthorization of HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants programs expanded the low-cost, efficient models of rapid re-housing and emergency prevention through the Emergency Solutions block grant. Without adequate funding, communities will be unable to continue the great success they have had implementing these programs through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP).
- *Discuss the local success of HPRP and share any outcomes data you have from the program.*
- **Runaway and Homeless Youth.** The best studies indicate that over 1 million youth are homeless each year in America. Once homeless, many youth face survival on the streets, recruitment by gangs, exposure to drugs, and sexual exploitation by adults. The Runaway and Homeless Youth programs within HHS are the only federal program targeted specifically to unaccompanied, homeless youth.
- In 2010, RHYA programs made over 500,000 street outreach contacts with homeless and at-risk youth, of which less than 24,000 received access to a shelter bed; and
 - In 2009, nationally, Transitional Living Programs exceeded the federal targets for safe program exits and for program youths' participation in community service activities.
 - *Talk about the local importance and success of RHYA Street Outreach, Basic Center, and Transitional Living Programs.*
- **Please ask your boss to contact the Appropriations Committee leaders RIGHT AWAY** to ensure that any final FY 2011 funding bill include at least:
- \$2.2 billion for HUD's McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants program;
 - 10,000 new HUD-VASH vouchers;
 - 10,000 new housing vouchers under the Housing and Services for Homeless Persons Demonstration; and
 - \$126 million for Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs.