

**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
OVERVIEW OF NEW AND CROSS-CUTTING INITIATIVES
INITIATIVES TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS**

The Obama Administration is committed to the belief that no one should be without a safe, stable place to call home. As part of this commitment, under the leadership of Secretary Donovan, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) released the *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* (FSP). The FSP provides a roadmap for Federal agencies and the homeless assistance community to achieve four clear goals:

1. End chronic homelessness in 5 years;
2. Prevent and end homelessness among veterans in 5 years;
3. Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children within a decade; and
4. Set a path to eradicate all types of homelessness.

This historic Plan establishes a vision and path for allocating and aligning resources across public and private sectors and at all levels of government to significantly reduce the overall homeless population.

To achieve the goals set in the FSP, stakeholders must work together to maximize resources and provide the most effective services possible to men, women and children experiencing homelessness. By forging new partnerships between Federal agencies like HUD, Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Department of Labor (DOL), the FSP includes comprehensive strategies to help homeless men, women and children find a home and the services, treatment and jobs they need to stay in that home. The fiscal year 2012 Budget will illustrate how HUD is partnering with other agencies to capitalize on resources and experience, and to highlight the positive results being experienced through current programs like the HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program (HUD-VASH).

HUD has a central role in providing housing, coordinating services, and collecting data to reflect the results of the FSP. The Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) is HUD's primary office for providing funding and assistance for the homeless community. However, to meet the needs of the FSP, several offices in HUD are coordinating closely and are requesting resources to accomplish the goals of FSP. The summary below discusses how each participating office's contribution to the FSP will impact the fiscal year 2012 Budget.

Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAPS)

The majority of the fiscal year 2012 Budget for the SNAPS office in CPD will be used to fund competitive homeless assistance grants through the Continuum of Care (CoC) as well as the homeless formula funding administered through the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program. The funds requested include costs related to rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing (PSH) interventions that directly impact HUD's contribution to meeting the FSP goals. Through rapid re-housing interventions HUD will be able to fund projects that rapidly re-house individuals who are experiencing short-term homelessness and prevent those who are at imminent risk of homelessness from becoming homeless. PSH interventions provide long-term housing and services to those who are disabled and homeless, including the chronically homeless. The budget request for the SNAPS office's competitive grants is \$2.03 billion of which an estimated \$1.91 billion will be used to fund renewal projects. The ESG budget request is for \$286 million. HUD's fiscal year 2012 budget request for CPD's Homeless Assistance Grants program is \$2.372 billion, which will fund existing units that are targeted to homeless persons and provide necessary financial support to prevent and end homelessness through further rapid re-housing and PSH interventions.

Initiatives to Prevent and End Homelessness

Mainstream Housing Contributions

Through the Office of Multifamily Housing Programs (Multifamily) and the Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH), HUD will use its mainstream housing programs, such as Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) and public housing, to assist households who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. In order to successfully incentivize participation in the FSP, CPD (the subject matter experts on homelessness) and PIH/Multifamily (subject matter experts in the mainstream housing programs) must work together to design and implement an initiative that meets the needs of homeless households and landlords.

Although a number of PHAs and HUD project-based assisted housing owners have successfully targeted homeless populations, those that have hesitated to do so raise common concerns. Specifically, PHAs and owners point to the possibility that homeless households will damage the unit beyond the amount covered by the security deposit, or vacate the unit with rent in arrears. Additionally, for homeless individuals and families with supportive services needs, PHAs and owners fear that those needs will go unmet in the absence of reliable service coordination (activities that connect households to community-based social safety net programs)—these unmet service needs may also result in problems for stable tenancy.

HUD's homeless programs have worked closely with landlords to address these types of concerns for many years—most recently through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid-Rehousing Program (HPRP) funded through the Recovery Act. HUD proposes to use these lessons to encourage PHA and private owners (including landlords who participate in the Housing Choice Voucher program) to serve homeless individuals and families targeted by the FSP through a \$50 million initiative requested in the Homeless Assistance Grants account with the following eligible uses: (1) Service coordination; (2) payment of incentive/administrative cost fees; and (3) indemnifying PHAs (in the case of public housing) and owners (in the case of project-based assistance or Housing Choice Vouchers) for the loss of security deposits, damages in excess of security deposits, rent-skipping, and other potential obstacles to targeting homeless households to be determined. The purpose of this initiative is to test—based on feedback from PHAs and private owners/landlords within the Notice of Funding Availability process—the combination of Federal supports that will help to increase targeting of mainstream housing resources to homeless households.

PIH is committed to supporting the Department's mission to promote safe, decent, and affordable housing, particularly with regard to the Department's role in the FSP, through its HCV and public housing units. By providing affordable housing solutions, through either HCVs or public housing units, HUD will be able to stabilize the housing situation for homeless households with lower barriers to housing and will reduce the potential for recidivism through coordinated services. PIH is committed especially to interagency partnerships that leverage HCVs and the supportive services funding streams administered by other Federal agencies. In fiscal year 2012, PIH is requesting:

- \$83 million for HUD-VASH vouchers and administrative fees, continuing the successful partnership between HUD and VA to end veteran homelessness; and
- \$62 million for vouchers and administrative fees targeted to the chronically homeless and homeless families with school age children—to be administered in partnership with HHS and the Department of Education—which will provide critical support services as well as helping to identify eligible families.

Measurable Outcomes/Measures of Success

The increase of targeted housing through vouchers, affordable housing units, and PSH units is the key component needed for meeting the goals of the FSP. Tracking the incremental increase in units dedicated to homeless persons will allow HUD to understand how these resources impact the number of homeless households being reported by local communities through the annual Point-In-Time counts as well as through longitudinal data captured through local Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS). The FSP used these data as a baseline for determining the resources needed to meet the stated goals and will use these data in annual updates.

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Homeless households entering HUD's housing programs will benefit from service coordination designed to increase the rate of enrollment in important mainstream resources. The FSP's emphasis on homelessness prevention is an important step towards early and more effective intervention. Indeed, many individuals and families at risk of homelessness will gain the necessary support before being forced to enter the homeless services system—a less disruptive and more cost-effective approach. Using rapid re-housing as a tool to quickly move eligible households into permanent units frees resources in the homeless system and decreases the overall impact of homelessness on the family, especially on children.

In addition to the decrease in the total number of chronically homeless persons and homeless families and veterans, HUD expects that the implementation of the FSP will result in greater use of mainstream resources and benefits by these populations as a result of high-level coordination between Federal agencies. As partnerships form between Federal, state, and local governments—as well as the non-profit homeless assistance community—the finite resources dedicated to end homelessness will be maximized to create the greatest benefit.

HUD will track the following measures to determine success and assist in annual updates to the FSP:

- The total number of FSP units and rapid re-housing interventions brought on-line per year by community;
- The number of households that become homeless in the communities receiving funding; and
- The percentage increase of Federal mainstream resources being used in local housing and service delivery systems.

Evidence and knowledge-building strategies

There is a large body of research focused on the benefit of providing housing first and using the stable home as a springboard to receiving vital supportive services. Using data that is collected at a point-in-time at the end of January of each year, HUD will be able to measure how many persons are entering the shelter system. HUD also requires its grantees to gather point-in-time information about the unsheltered homeless population at least biennially. This point-in-time data will provide a snapshot of the number of homeless persons in the homeless system and whether it is changing over time. HUD homeless assistance grantees also report their performance results annually, including data about access to mainstream services and demographical characteristics of those homeless persons receiving assistance through HUD-funded grants.

As performance data is reported, HUD will be able to analyze the impact of an increase in homeless-targeted housing options, including more affordable housing reserved for the homeless population, housing vouchers for homeless persons, and homelessness prevention funds aimed at stabilizing the persons at risk of becoming homeless.