

Having an Impact: Housing and Homelessness Policymaking

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NORTH CAROLINA
COALITION to END
HOMELESSNESS

2018 HUD funding

Good news from Congress!

No seriously, actually good news!

Congress provided \$4.7 billion more to HUD for 2018 than 2017

Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8)

Fully renewed all vouchers currently in use.

~60,000 new vouchers targeted on homeless or at-risk of homelessness:

- \$402 million for people with disabilities
- \$45 million for new HUD-VASH vouchers
- \$20 million for new Family Unification Program vouchers (for child-welfare involved families who are homeless or unstably housed)

Public Housing

Big increase in funding (almost \$1 billion more than 2017), but that doesn't fill the hole Congress has dug for public housing in recent years

Homeless Assistance (CoC/ESG)

Increase of \$130 million over 2017

Whole increase targeted on special populations:

- \$80 million for youth
- \$50 million for rapid rehousing for survivors of DV

What should we expect next year?

There's still room for additional increases

If we get them, they'll probably once again be targeted on specific groups

One senator has already proposed an additional \$110 million for new FUP vouchers and other vouchers targeted on homelessness (specifics tba)

How to bring new funding to NC communities

HCV NOFAs are out now, and more to come. PHAs with current community partnerships and experience serving target populations more likely to be funded.

Expect another Youth Homeless Demonstration Program NOFA

Open question: how will HUD allocate DV RRH?

And...the bad news

There had to be something, right?

Proposed rent increases and work requirements

The Trump Administration has proposed increasing rents for people receiving housing assistance (affecting most programs, including CoC).

Also proposing an option to allow PHAs to impose work requirements.

Who could see higher rents?

4.1 million households, families with kids hardest hit.

Non-elderly, non-disabled households would pay 35% instead of 30% of income, and deductions for child care are eliminated.

Non-elderly, non-disabled households paying the minimum rent (currently \$50) will see rents increase 3 times to ~\$150/month.

Some elderly/disabled probably could also see higher rents due to elimination of certain deductions from rent calculations.

Who might lose assistance?

PHAs would be able to choose to impose requirements to work.

- Anyone who isn't disabled (or can't prove disability) and can't find a job, or can't get enough hours, could lose assistance.

Anyone who can't afford a rent hike could lose assistance.

Will work requirements help people get jobs?

Research says: probably not.

- Little long-term gains in employment, and greatly disadvantages those with large barriers to employment.

Better approach: HUD already has work support programs: Family Self-Sufficiency Program and Jobs-Plus. Congress could expand these.

Will this proposal pass?

Maybe, but it has an uphill battle.

But pieces of it could be snuck into smaller bills.

Will policy makers listen to me?

Yes!

You're experts on what's happening in their communities.

You're experts on how policies affect the direct work.

You DON'T need to be lawyers or experts in the policy details.

Policymakers are just funders

They want the same things as foundations and private donors:

- Is their money being used well?
- Does it have the intended effect?
- Will funding your program get them publicity, positive press, and/or help them do/keep their job?

If yes, they'll keep funding you, possibly increase their investment.

It's like making friends:

Invite them over

Keep in touch afterward

Tell them the news when good things happen

Invite them back

Getting insider access: building staff relationships

Make really good friends with three people

- Scheduler
- DC-based housing staff
- Chief of Staff (if possible)

DC-based staff can leave DC too, and they really really love those trips.

Stay focused

Remember your asks.

Point out where federal/state policy/funding has been helpful.

Don't get into discussions beyond the scope of your program – don't worry, they won't be offended.

My Member of Congress/NCGA is too...

Conservative, liberal, busy, focused on other things, beholden to special interests, etc to listen to me!

They're still politicians: they want to get re-elected, and they want to build as much local good will as possible.

You don't know until you try!