



CSH urges Members of the 115th Congress to prioritize sound, cost-effective public policies that:

- ✓ Preserve key investments in housing and health care programs
- ✓ Preserve and increase housing investments through tax reform
- ✓ Expand investments in targeted interventions employing data and evidence-based solutions
- ✓ Refine key programs to spur innovation and increase flexibility, with accountability

2017 FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES

CSH will advocate for the following priorities in the 115th Congress

PRESERVE & ENHANCE KEY INVESTMENTS IN RENTAL ASSISTANCE

- **Preserve Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program** and ensure all existing contracts are funded for full 12-month period. Currently, only 25% of individuals and families eligible for housing assistance receive it.
- **Expand investments in Special Purpose Vouchers** through the Section 8 program, targeting Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers for individuals and families with histories of homelessness and acute health needs, and for people exiting institutional care settings. Study after study demonstrates that access to affordable housing and supports reduces child-welfare system and foster care utilization for families.
- **Expand investment in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance grants**, and better target the resources to provide rental assistance to chronically homeless populations eligible for supportive housing. Evidence suggests this will reduce cost to other crisis systems including emergency room visits, inpatient hospital days (covered by Medicaid), jail costs, and more.
- **Preserve the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund at \$250 M in FY 2018.** Treasury's CDFI Fund provides funding to certified organizations to help drive community revitalization through loans, grants and equity investments.
- **Create a new funding mechanism for seniors, the Service-Enriched Affordable Living (SEAL) program**, administered by HUD. SEAL will provide a leveraging source of construction resources to nonprofit sponsors for the development of affordable housing for very low income seniors.
- **Preserve the National Housing Trust Fund.** The Trust Fund, financed through revenue from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, provides capital to finance affordable and supportive housing largely for people with extremely low-incomes. These sources should continue to finance the Trust Fund.
- **Preserve the HOME Investment Partnership Program at \$1.2 B in FY 2018.** HUD's HOME Program provides states and other jurisdictions with additional subsidy to develop low and moderate income housing. HOME is vital for meeting local housing needs and addressing gaps in financing of affordable housing.

ENACT TAX REFORM EXPANDING INVESTMENT IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

- **Expand the Low Income Housing Tax Credit by 50 percent.** We urge that the cap on Housing Credit authority be increased by at least 50 percent as proposed in S. 548. Such an expansion would support the preservation and construction of up to 400,000 additional affordable apartments over a ten-year period, which would support up to 450,000 jobs. Since its inception, the Credit has generated \$310 billion in local income, \$122 billion in tax revenues and 3.25 million jobs.
- **Provide 50% basis boost as incentive to serve homeless families.** As part of Housing Credit expansion, Congress should provide a 50% basis boost to spur the development of housing for homeless families and extremely low-income households as proposed in H.R. 1661/S. 548.
- **Preserve the New Markets Tax Credit.** Congress should make the New Markets Tax Credit a permanent part of the tax code to spur development in low-income communities as proposed in H.R. 1098/S. 384. Since its inception, the NMTC has financed 178 million square feet of manufacturing, office, and retail space for over 5,400 businesses, generated \$8 of private investment for every \$1 of federal funding.

INCREASE FLEXIBILITY FOR STATES AND COUNTIES TO KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER

- **Support Child Welfare Reform efforts to expand use of Title IV-E dollars for Family Preservation.** This proposal would allow states to access federal funding under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act for quality mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services and in-home parent skill-based programs. The result will be early intervention to allow children to remain safely home with their families and out of the child welfare system.
- **Invest in Keeping Families Together Fund.** Even if a family no longer has an open child welfare case, they may still struggle with the issues that put them at risk for child welfare involvement and homelessness. Investing in the family to keep children with their parents, together in a home of their own, is an effective strategy for breaking the costly cycle of intergenerational poverty.

FLEXIBILITY FOR STATE MEDICAID SERVICES & SUBSTANCE USE INVESTMENTS

- **Work with State Medicaid agencies to approve State Waiver requests.** A number of states have submitted Waiver Requests to CMS to use current Medicaid authorities to align Medicaid and affordable housing resources to increase supportive housing capacity. States have used a variety of waiver mechanisms, including a supportive housing benefit, so that Medicaid supports the cost effective services that expand supportive housing capacity. Many of the waivers are under the Research and Demonstration authority of Medicaid and the results contribute to reduced Medicaid costs.
- **Expand partnership opportunities and flexibility through programs like the Innovator Accelerator Program (IAP).** The Innovator Accelerator Program focuses on Medicaid Housing-Related Services and Partnerships (HRSP) and creates excellent opportunities to bring together key state leaders to develop innovative models to integrate resources, deploy funding more efficiently, and create additional supportive housing capacity.
- **Ensure investments to address the Opioid Crisis strategically and holistically address addiction.** The \$1 billion investment should be deployed flexibly to address community needs. Incentives should be added to provide funding to communities that employ a holistic approach, including addressing housing, mental and primary health issues. Additional investments in the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, (CSAT) also should be made to leverage resources, and expanded access to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) to ensure persons can access treatment as needed.

ENSURE HEALTH COVERAGE CONTINUES & ENCOURAGE INNOVATION

- **Ensure health coverage for the lowest income Medicaid beneficiaries continues** even if the Affordable Care Act is altered. Coverage should include behavioral health care and primary physical health care.

- **Encourage and increase access for housing resources to pair with the healthcare system**, a proven model for reducing public costs while serving as a platform for improved health and economic sufficiency.
- **Provide incentives/make it easier for states to increase Medicaid beneficiaries' use of Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS)**, responding to the individual's preferences to live at home or in home-like settings. By substituting for more expensive institutional services, increasing the use of HCBS has the potential to further reduce costs and expand access to needed supports in states with waiting lists for services.

EXPAND INVESTMENTS IN OUTCOME-BASED FINANCING MODELS & TOOLS

- **Restore the Social Innovation Fund at \$50 M in FY 2018** to implement innovative and effective evidence-based solutions that lead to better economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development.
- **Support passage of Social Impact Partnership Act.** The Social Impact Partnership Act is bipartisan legislation to strengthen the federal role in supporting state and local Social Impact Partnerships, also known as Pay for Success contracts.
- **Establish a Community Solutions Tax Credit** to stimulate private sector investment to support the growth and expansion of high-performing community programs. Certified intermediaries would compete for tax credit allocations from which they would make available tax credits to individual investors who provide capital to high-impact community initiatives. This would enable organizations close to the community, rather than the federal bureaucracy, to select providers based on local plans and support investment into proven community-based solutions.
- **Provide \$20M in Second Chance Act funding to expand Pay for Success and outcomes-based financing** models that leverage federal, state, local and private investments to expand housing opportunities for people cycling between homelessness and incarceration.

SUPPORT INNOVATIVE MODELS FOR ADMINISTERING RENTAL ASSISTANCE

- **Establish a “sponsor-basing” option** to provide public housing agencies with flexibility to contract with non-profits to manage Section 8 vouchers, and ensure alignment and connection to healthcare and other community services for individuals and families.

SUPPORT INVESTMENTS THAT ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Provide a minimum of \$68 M for the Second Chance Act Program.** The Second Chance Act provides grants to states and local communities to reduce crime and recidivism by improving outcomes for people returning to their communities from prisons and jails, providing vital services—including employment training, substance use treatment, education, housing, family programming, mentoring, victims support, and other services.
- **Provide a minimum of \$12 M for the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA).** MIOTCRA provides grants to local communities to improve access to treatment for people with mental illnesses in the criminal justice system. The law funds mental health courts, mental health and substance-use treatment for people in the criminal justice system, community reentry services, and local law enforcement training.