Immensely budgetary pressure faced by the federal government leaves key programs that end homelessness through supportive housing subject to cuts. In 2012, CSH will place greater emphasis on accessing mainstream housing and services resources. This new focus is supported by the growing role supportive housing plays in reducing not just homelessness, but also the cost of frequent and inappropriate use of public systems by vulnerable populations. CSH will continue to partner with allies to protect and preserve funding for programs we’ve worked to build over the past decade.

**Improve the Section 8 Program to Better Serve Homeless and Special Needs Populations**

**Congress should:**

- Enact the President’s budget proposal to allow PHAs to conduct competitions for Section 8 vouchers to be sponsor-based, like in the McKinney-Vento Shelter Plus Care program, to increase the capacity and ability to serve special needs populations.
- Provide sufficient funding to renew all existing Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers.
- Enact Section 8 Reform legislation to improve the program and increase PHA flexibility to project-base rental assistance for special needs populations.
- Restore funding of PHA Section 8 administrative fees to $1.883 billion to improve PHAs’ ability to work with special needs populations.
- Reject proposals to increase the minimum rent Section 8 voucher holders or public housing residents must pay and improve tenant protections to obtain a hardship exemption from minimum rent requirements.

**Increase Investments in Supportive Housing for the Most Vulnerable Families**

**The Administration should:**

- Develop a $10 million demonstration within HHS’ Administration for Children and Families’ Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program targeting services and housing to highly vulnerable, homeless families with open child welfare cases.

**Preserve SAMHSA Funding for Services in Supportive Housing**

**Congress should:**

- Provide $100 million for SAMHSA’s Homeless Services Grant Program coordinated between its Center for Mental Health Services and Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.
- Allocate full funding of $75 million for the PATH program.

**Preserve the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Program and Support HEARTH Act Implementation**

**Congress should:**

- Provide the President’s request of $2.23 billion for HUD McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants to ensure new supportive housing production while communities initiate new homelessness prevention programs.

**The Administration should:**

- Ensure that regulatory implementation of the HEARTH Act maximizes supportive housing as a tool for the most vulnerable.
Ensure and Expand Linkages to Supportive Housing Through Health Reform

The Administration should:

- Issue Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) guidance to states on how Medicaid and Medicare can be used to finance services in supportive housing.

State and Local government should:

- Ensure that Home and Community Based Waiver and State Option Services can be delivered in all supportive housing settings (scattered site, single site and integrated).
- Ensure that as states implement health reform and seek to reduce Medicaid costs, services in supportive housing are included in Medicaid benefit packages for vulnerable populations.
- Ensure that connections to supportive housing are included as states and health care agencies develop new health care service delivery and financing models such as health homes, expanding Medicaid managed care or developing Accountable Care Organizations.
- Foster partnerships between state Medicaid agencies and housing finance agencies to better connect housing and services through the Frank Melville Supportive Housing Act (Section 811).

End Homelessness Among Veterans

Congress should:

- Appropriate $75 million for 10,000 new HUD-VASH vouchers in Fiscal Year 2013.
- Enact S. 411/H.R. 1133 to clarify that VA Medical Centers may contract with state and local agencies or nonprofit organizations to improve the delivery of case management services to VASH recipients.

The Administration should:

- Develop a VA housing appropriateness tool to ensure homeless veterans are matched to the federal program(s) that best meet their needs, with HUD-VASH resources reserved for those homeless veterans with the highest housing and service needs.

Protect the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program

Congress should:

- Enact S.1989/H.R. 3661 to permanently fix Low Income Housing Tax Credits at 9% and tax-exempt bond credits at 4%.
- Amend the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program to provide a credit boost of 15% for supportive housing serving homeless populations.

Advocates should:

- Educate policymakers involved in tax reform of how critical the Housing Credit is to the production of all affordable housing—including supportive housing for the homeless.
Additional Priorities

Improve and Expand Programs Connecting Housing With Health Services

Congress should:

- Fund the federal Departments of Health and Human Services and Housing and Urban Development to improve their partnerships to:
  - Fund Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities at no less than $165 million.
  - Provide $3.1 billion in total programmatic funding (the President’s request) for Community Health Centers, which would include $270 million for Health Care for the Homeless.

End Homelessness Among Older Adults and Seniors

Congress and the Administration should:

- Create a $50 million demonstration program to create housing connected to Medicare, Medicaid and other health services for older adults and seniors experiencing homelessness, especially those with complex health needs.

Expand Housing Opportunities for Homeless Populations Involved in the Criminal Justice System

Congress should:

- Reauthorize the Second Chance Act with an increased emphasis on coordinating housing and services.
- Re-introduce and enact the Criminal Justice Reinvestment Act.
- Fund the Second Chance Act at the President’s request of $80 million.

Restore/Expand Funding for Mainstream Housing Resources That Benefit Supportive Housing

Congress should:

- Recognize the importance of HOME funding as a flexible source for gap financing in supportive housing projects and restore funding for the program to at least $1.6 billion.
- Capitalize the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) with an initial $1 billion and authorize new ways for annually funding the NHTF.

Congress should fund the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) with adequate funds to support the Administration’s request for the Social Innovation Fund.

Congress should provide at least level funding of $227 million for the Treasury Department’s Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund and provide additional capital for the Capital Magnet Fund.

Congress should provide at least the President’s budget request of $650 million for the Native American Housing Block Grant.

The Administration should promote the SSI/SSDI, Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) Initiative and lessons learned within SAMHSA and the Social Security Administration.

Questions? Contact us.

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