

CSH will advocate for strong federal investment in programs and initiatives that create supportive housing and expand access to mainstream programs for homeless and vulnerable populations. Our policy priorities aim to increase affordable housing, improving systems collaboration and fostering innovative solutions that remove housing barriers for vulnerable individuals and families. More specifically, CSH will focus significant energy on increasing appropriations for Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants, SAMHSA grants; securing resources to expand supportive housing for homeless and child-welfare involved families; and spurring innovation through the Social Innovation Fund, Treasury's Pay for Success Incentive Fund and the CDFI Fund.



INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

Increase HUD Funding to Support Homeless and Special Needs Populations:

HUD programs play a critical role in creating and preserving supportive housing opportunities for homeless and vulnerable populations. CSH makes the following funding recommendations for the FY2015 HUD budget:

- Provide an additional \$320 million over the FY2015 HUD request for the **Housing Choice Voucher** program in order to restore funding for 40,000 special purpose vouchers lost due to sequestration;
- Support the FY2015 HUD budget request for an additional \$300 million for **McKinney Homeless Assistance Grants to create 37,000 units of supportive housing** toward the goal of ending chronic homelessness;
- Fund the **Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities** program at \$235 million preserve existing units and create almost 900 new integrated supportive housing units for persons with disabilities.

Expand the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program:

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit is the largest housing production program in the country. First created in 1986, it has helped finance over 2.5 million affordable rental apartments and leveraged nearly \$100 billion in private investment capital. CSH supports **S. 1442, bipartisan legislation** introduced by Sen. Cantwell that would enhance the credit program. In addition, CSH recommends that Congress **create a credit boost of 15% for housing targeting homeless populations.**

Establish a Funding Source for the National Housing Trust Fund in Housing Finance Reform:

The National Housing Trust Fund was authorized in 2008 in the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, but has yet to be funded. Housing finance reform creates a unique opportunity to make meaningful changes to the housing finance system to ensure stability in the housing market and establish a dedicated funding stream for the National Housing Trust Fund. Bipartisan housing finance reform legislation developed by Chairman Tim Johnson (D-SD) and Ranking Member Mike Crapo (R-ID) would dedicate up to \$3.5 billion for the NHTF. CSH supports housing finance reform legislation that will ensure funding for the NHTF.

Expand Housing Resources for Native American Indian Populations:

The **Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA)** provides block grant funding to Indian tribes or tribally-designated housing entities (TDHEs) for the creation and preservation of affordable housing in Indian Country. Reauthorization of NAHASDA will ensure that affordable housing is created to reduce the number of Native American families that are experiencing homelessness or are living in substandard housing conditions. Further, NAHASDA should set aside funding to create supportive housing opportunities for Native American homeless veterans.

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO ASSIST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Target Resources to Stably House Vulnerable Youth and Families with Children:

Progress must continue toward ending homelessness among families and youth. Some communities have seen alarming increases in homelessness among these populations. A portion of these families have significant challenges: parents with a disability, substance abuse and addiction, lack of employment or under-employment, high involvement with the child welfare system and limited family supports. A range of housing options are needed in order to ensure the right intervention is targeted to the right families. CSH urges Congress and the Administration to do the following:

- Target HUD and HHS resources to provide a range of permanent housing and supports options for vulnerable families based on need, especially for those experiencing homelessness and those who are highly involved with the child welfare system.
- HHS and ACYF should identify resources to fund additional grants to local providers demonstrating supportive housing's effectiveness in addressing the needs of families who are highly involved in the child welfare system.
- HHS and ACYF should identify resources to fund additional grants to states and local providers to address housing needs among youth experiencing homelessness.

Promote Public-Private Partnerships to Create Supportive Housing Solutions:

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) provides targeted grants that foster collaboration between the public and private sector to scale community-based solutions that are evidence-based. As a SIF grantee, CSH is pursuing housing plus

health care interventions with four grantees across the country, testing the intervention's impact. CSH supports **funding SIF at \$80 million in FY2015.**

CSH supports \$300 million for the Treasury Department's Pay for Success Incentive Fund to help State and local Governments implement Pay for Success programs with philanthropies, nonprofits, and other nongovernmental organizations *and* provide credit enhancements for philanthropic investments and outcome payments for successful, money-saving services.

Improve Coordination Between Health Care Services and Housing for Seniors:

Seniors make up 31% of households assisted through federal rental assistance programs. In addition, HUD's Homeless Point in Time Counts shows small but disturbing increases in homelessness among seniors. Better integrating health-care and housing will improve delivery of health-related services, reduce the use of unnecessary and expensive care alternatives and help residents maintain independence. CSH supports HUD's request for **\$20 million to create supportive affordable housing through the Section 202 program** for seniors that focuses on coordination with health-care systems.

Strengthen HUD-VA Partnership to End Veteran's Homelessness

The HUD-VASH program is successful in reducing chronic homelessness among veterans. Over the past three years, Congress has provided over 62,000 housing vouchers to homeless veterans that have led to the reduction in homeless veterans by 17% between 2009 and 2012. Critical to ending homelessness among veterans is the commitment by HUD and the VA to work collaboratively to efficiently deliver supportive services and housing. CSH supports an additional **\$75 million to create an additional 10,000 HUD-VASH vouchers.**

Increase Supportive Housing Opportunities for Individuals Involved in the Criminal Justice System

Breaking the cycle of incarceration and homelessness among individuals who are frequent users of the criminal justice system requires coordination and collaboration of intervention services. Wrap around services combined with housing is an effective way to reduce the use of crisis intervention systems and improve housing stability for frequent users of the criminal justice system. Addressing barriers at both the state and federal level are key to reducing recidivism and improving front-end diversion for those that would benefit from supportive housing. CSH makes the following recommendations to reach these goals:

- Reauthorize the **Second Chance Act**, bipartisan legislation that would provide grants that coordinate re-entry services. CSH supports the FY2015 budget request to **fund grants at \$115 million.**
- Make improvements to the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction programs by passing the bipartisan **Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act** and funding new grants that focus on evidence-based practices in FY2015.

IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY AND FINANCING FOR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Increase Funding for Service Programs Targeted to Help Homeless Populations:

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) provides supportive services funding and access to health care for homeless and vulnerable populations. The most successful intervention for ending and preventing homelessness is linking housing to appropriate support services. Supportive housing ends the cycle of frequently and inappropriately using expensive social supports and institutional care that people with complex needs cannot break while homeless. CSH makes the following recommendations for the FY2015 HHS budget:

- Provide **\$100 million to SAMHSA’s Center for Mental Health and Center for Substance Abuse homeless programs** for essential mental health and substance use treatment services. These grants help chronically homeless families and individuals acquire and maintain permanent supportive housing.
- Ensure homeless populations have access to primary health care through Community Health Centers and **Healthcare for the Homeless (HCH) projects**. HCH projects deliver health and related services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Funding **CHC at \$1.5 billion** in the discretionary HHS budget and **\$3.6 billion** through ACA implementation will continue to reduce unnecessary health related expenditures while addressing the healthcare needs of homeless populations.

Maximize Medicaid Reimbursement for Supportive Housing Services

Supportive housing is increasingly accepted as an intervention to stabilize those with chronic illnesses, including behavioral health conditions, and reduce health system costs. States have begun to explore ways to improve Medicaid financing of the services and supports supportive housing residents need. This includes states and managed care organizations looking for ways to use Medicaid to streamline services financing and coordinate integrated service delivery.

- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services should work with states to develop innovative solutions to financing services and housing supports for supportive housing residents.
- State Medicaid agencies should comprehensively reimburse coordinated services and supports in supportive housing. Using Medicaid mechanisms such as health homes, the Medicaid rehabilitation option, home and community-based services, the community support program and targeted 1115 waiver demonstrations, states can develop supportive housing services packages and create payment models that allow supportive housing providers to receive reimbursement for delivered services.

Expand Financing Opportunities to Create Supportive Housing

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) provide financing to create and support affordable housing and community development projects. CDFIs make access to affordable financial products available to developers to finance the development costs associated with creating supportive housing. Programs like the **New Market Tax Credit**, **CDFI Bond Guarantee Program** and the **Capital Magnet Fund** are tools that CDFIs utilize to leverage private investment to support supportive housing initiatives in local communities. CSH supports the continuation of these programs and funding of the Capital Magnet Fund through housing finance reform.

STRENGTHEN FEDERAL INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

Improve Access to Employment for Individuals in Supportive Housing

Access to employment is essential in helping people maintain stable housing and eventually move on from supportive housing programs. People living in supportive housing have many barriers to employment due to behavioral health issues, child-caring responsibilities, age, physical disability, trauma, incomplete education or insufficient occupational skills. CSH makes the following policy recommendations:

- The **Workforce Investment Act** should be reauthorized and include provisions to incentivize Workforce Investment Boards and employment programs to target resources to the hardest to serve. This includes developing performance measures that, rather than penalizing, encourages providers to assist those with complex needs
- Work with CMS and states to include supported employment as a Medicaid reimbursable benefit.

Expanding Access to Social Security Income and Social Security Disability

Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI) are vitally important for low-income, disabled populations. The income received goes toward rental assistance and basic necessities. In addition, many states use SSI/SSDI eligibility to determine Medicaid eligibility which helps individuals access important support services. We have learned many lessons to improve SSI/SSDI policies and practices through the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery initiative (SOAR). SSA should implement the follow recommendations:

- Broader dissemination of the SOAR process to ensure universal implementation;
- Create SSA and DDS Liaisons in each office to ensure uniform treatment of SSI/SSDI applications among homeless applicants;
- Expand the medical professionals who can submit documentation on behalf of SSI/SSDI applicants;
- For homeless and other low-income disabled populations new policies that require printing of social security verification and ID requirements to obtain social security number documentation could disrupt access to housing and other supports. SSA should modify this policy to consider the burden it puts on homeless and other low-income disabled populations.