

NEW JERSEY ADVOCACY NETWORK TO END HOMELESSNESS

FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2009 AND FY 2010 APPROPRIATIONS

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CONSUMER

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2009 will be a year of change. The new Administration comes to Washington with a tremendous opportunity to make the most significant reduction in homelessness in America since this societal plague emerged, while helping communities respond with cost-effective solutions to the growing nationwide housing and health care crisis. Thanks to rigorous research, evidence-based practices and the experience of providers on the ground we know how to end homelessness provided the right blend of resources are made available.

We also know that ending homelessness by providing stable, supportive housing is a much better investment than leaving homeless people stuck in the revolving door of high-cost crisis care and emergency shelter. Independent studies in communities across the nation have documented the extraordinary costs for ineffective emergency responses to long-term homelessness, and the dramatic savings achieved – through reductions in the use of hospitals, ambulances, shelter, jails, and crisis treatment facilities – when public and private resources are invested in a long-term solution that produces better results for people and their communities. As federal, state and local governments struggle in the current economic downturn to make the most efficient use of limited resources for health care and community

The Initial Agenda for 2009 as identified by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, CSH, NAMI, NLIHC and Enterprise includes:

ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE - \$15.6 Billion measure to help prevent homelessness and increase affordable housing:

- ✦ **\$2 billion for homeless prevention.** Funding would be used to provide housing search assistance, short or medium-term rental assistance, relocation funding, security and utility deposits, mortgage payments, rent payments, and case management to prevent and end homelessness. It would be distributed by formula to the jurisdictions that receive Emergency Shelter Grants funding and would serve approximately 200,000 households per year for two years.
- ✦ **\$10 billion for the National Housing Trust Fund (over 2 years)** – The Trust Fund primarily develops housing affordable to people with extremely low incomes. Funding would be prioritized to assist projects that are already in the pipeline but stalled because of the financial crisis and to projects that support local Ten Year Plans to End Homelessness.
- ✦ **\$3.6 billion for 400,000 Section 8 vouchers** – The housing choice vouchers would serve people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

McKINNEY VENTO REAUTHORIZATION

On October 2, 2008, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 7221, a substitute for the previously introduced H.R. 840, the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act. H.R. 7221 However, the U.S. Senate failed to pass this legislation prior to adjournment. The new Congress will take up the reauthorization of the HUD McKinney-Vento Act programs, but is likely to use H.R. 7221 as its starting point.

FY 2010 APPROPRIATIONS – MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT SERVICES FOR HOMELESS POPULATIONS (SAMHSA)

Current funding level of SAMHSA homeless program is \$56 million. The House version of the uncompleted FY 09 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (Labor-HHS) appropriations bill recommended an increase of \$21million, while the Senate's version recommended level funding. The FY 2010 request is for \$120 million in SAMHSA homeless programs for essential mental health and substance use treatment services linked to permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals and families and other housing programs targeted to homeless families, youth and individuals. The request would increase funding by \$64million over the FY 08 funding level.

ADDITIONAL EFFORTS

Services for Ending Long Term Homelessness (SELHA): Efforts around SELHA are anticipated to be included in a larger SAMHSA package.

Homes for Heroes: Working to rewrite Homes for Heroes which would add additional VASH and include Veteran's Administration to sponsor services in permanent supportive housing.

Section 8 Voucher Reform (SEVRA) : Working group organized by Barbara Sard from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. It is expected that there will be some changes to the Reform bill as SEVRA moves forward, however, there will not be massive changes from last year.