

THE ENDING HOMELESSNESS ACT OF 2017

- Ranking Member Maxine Waters -

SECTION-BY-SECTION

Section 1: Title.

Section 2: Congressional Findings.

Section 3: Emergency Relief Funding.

Homeless Assistance Funding

Appropriation of Funds. Appropriates \$1 billion annually, not otherwise appropriated for each of the fiscal years 2018 through 2022, for emergency relief grants to address the unmet needs of homeless populations, particularly in jurisdictions with the highest need. Instructs the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary, in consultation with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) to establish a formula for allocating the grant amounts that takes into account the following factors: (A) poverty rates; (B) shortages of affordable and available housing for low, very low, and extremely low income households; (C) the number of overcrowded housing units; (D) the numbers of unsheltered homeless individuals and chronically homeless individuals; and (E) any other factors determined appropriate. Requires that the formula be devised swiftly and that the distribution of grant funding be within 30 days after establishment of the formula.

Targeting Chronic Homelessness. Requires that no less than 75 percent of the funding be used to create new permanent supportive housing (PSH), including capital costs, rental subsidies, and services. Allows the HUD Secretary to waive this requirement if the applicant can demonstrate that they have functionally ended chronic homelessness in their community, or that the PSH currently under development is sufficient to functionally end chronic homelessness once such units are available for occupancy.

Administrative Costs. Allows for no more than five percent of the total amount of the grant to be used for administrative costs.

Promoting Housing First. Directs the HUD Secretary to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that grantees are using a Housing First approach.

Ensuring Long-term Effectiveness. Provides that expiring contracts for leasing, rental assistance, or permanent housing funded by this section are eligible for contract renewals funded through the annual appropriations process.

Reporting. Requires the HUD Secretary and USICH to provide reports to Congress on the design and implementation of the grant program as well as semiannual reports on progress being made, including description of the activities funded with the grant amounts. Allows the HUD Secretary to collect any information necessary to comply with the reporting requirements.

Special Purpose Vouchers

Appropriation of Funds. Appropriates \$500 million annually, not otherwise appropriated for each of the fiscal years 2018 through 2022, for incremental assistance for rental assistance for persons and households who are homeless. Annual appropriations provided under this section shall fund new incremental vouchers.

Targeting of Assistance. Incremental vouchers funded by this section shall be provided based on geographic need for such assistance by homeless persons and households as determined by the Secretary. Requires that the incremental vouchers remain targeted to homeless persons and households upon turn-over.

Administrative Costs and Outreach. Allows for no more than 10 percent of the total amount of the grant to be used for administrative costs pursuant to § 8(q) of the United States Housing Act of 1937. Requires that the Secretary shall establish policies and procedures to provide such fees to the extent necessary to assist homeless persons and families on whose behalf rental assistance is provided to find and maintain suitable housing.

Ensuring Long-term Effectiveness. Provides for the renewal of contracts funded by this section through the annual appropriations process.

Flexibility in Administration. Allows the Secretary to waive, or specify alternative requirements for, any provision of statute or regulations related to the screening of applicants for assistance, admission of applicants, and selection of tenants in order to ensure that homeless persons or households can obtain housing. HUD shall ensure that housing authorities that receive vouchers funded through this section take all reasonable steps to avoid subsequent homelessness for residents.

Outreach Funding

Appropriation of Funds. Appropriates \$100 million annually, not otherwise appropriated for each of the fiscal years 2018 through 2022, for grants to provide outreach and coordinate services for homeless persons and households. Directs the HUD Secretary to make the grants on a competitive basis and shall give priority to applicants who submit plans to make innovative and effective use of staff funded with the grant amounts. Requires that the criteria for the competition be devised swiftly and that the distribution of grant funding be within 30 days after establishment of the criteria.

Section 4: Housing Trust Fund.

Appropriation of Funds. Appropriates \$1 billion annually, beginning in fiscal year 2018 and each fiscal year thereafter, for the Housing Trust Fund (HTF). Appropriates \$50 million annually, beginning in fiscal year 2018 and each fiscal year after, for incremental project-based assistance to be used in conjunction with grant funds awarded for the HTF by this section.

Ensuring Affordable Rents. Limits the tenant rent contribution to 30 percent of adjusted income as defined by section 3(b) of the United States Housing Act of 1937. Directs the HUD Secretary to issue revised regulations within 90 days of enactment of this Act.

Ensuring Priority for the Homeless. Ensures priority for occupancy for dwelling units created with the first five years of funding be available for homeless persons as defined in section 103 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Section 5: Technical Assistance Funds to Help States and Local Organizations Align Health and Housing Systems.

Appropriation of Funds. Appropriates \$20 million to provide technical assistance (TA) funding for HUD, in collaboration with USICH and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary, to expand its Healthcare and Housing (H2) Initiative to provide state- and local-level technical assistance in integrating and aligning policies and funding between Medicaid programs, behavioral health providers, and housing providers to create supportive housing opportunities. Priority of TA support shall be for states and localities that have the highest numbers of chronically homeless persons.

Coordination. Directs HUD to engage state Medicaid directors, governors, state housing and homelessness agencies, and any other relevant offices to assist states in increasing use of their Medicaid programs to finance supportive services for the homeless.

Section 6: Permanent Authorization of Appropriations for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Grants.

Provides for a permanent authorization of appropriations for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance grants.

Section 7: Permanent Extension of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Provides for a permanent extension of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness by repealing the current sunset date.