

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants

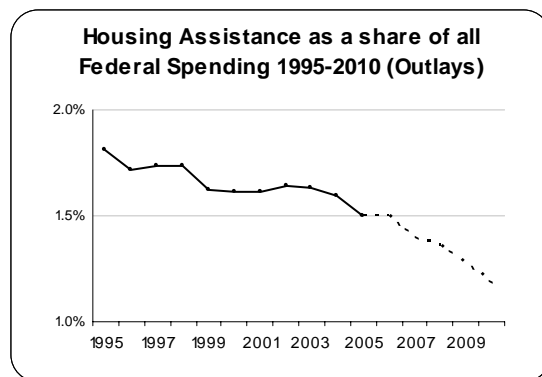
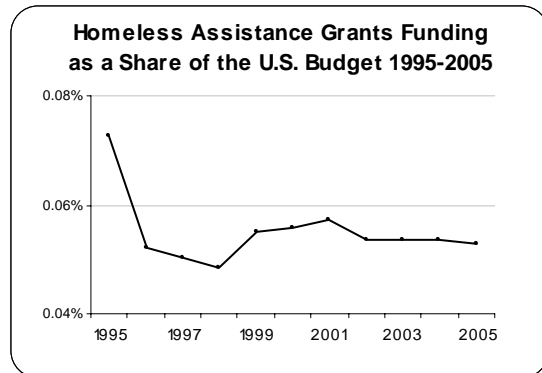
The undersigned national organizations—representing a broad range of faith-based and other community organizations working to end homelessness in America—urge Congress to fund the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants account at minimum at the \$1.44 billion level requested by the President for FY 2006.

Approximately 3.5 million people will experience homelessness this year, including 1.35 million children. Roughly 200,000 persons will be homeless repeatedly or for the long-term (months or and even years), typically while confronting mental illness, substance addiction or another chronic health condition. In 27 major cities, emergency shelter requests in 2004 grew by 6% compared to 2003, and fully 23% of requests went unmet (U.S. Conference of Mayors).

HUD’s Homeless Assistance Grants end homelessness for hundreds of thousands of people, including families with children, youth who have aged out of foster care, veterans, people with serious mental illness and others. **While Homeless Assistance Grants alone cannot prevent homelessness, they represent the current focus of the federal response, providing funding for emergency shelter, transitional housing, support services, and permanent housing that ensure people are safe and can make progress toward self sufficiency.**

We are deeply concerned about the erosion of both the Homeless Assistance Grants and overall federal housing assistance. OMB data show that the share of the U.S. budget dedicated to HUD’s Homeless Assistance Grants has declined by 8% over the last 4 years and by 28% since the homeless programs were first consolidated in 1995. Simultaneously, federal spending on housing assistance declined by 13% as a share of all spending.

The Administration’s future plans for housing programs—which include cuts to housing for people with disabilities and housing for people with HIV/AIDS, and a proposal to cut CDBG funding—are also troubling. The Administration’s budget proposal envisions a 36% decline in federal housing assistance by FY 2010. However, the short-term savings achieved by these cuts are illusory, as they would likely force communities to spend as much or more on shelters and emergency services to address growing homelessness in the future. **Congress should reject these further cuts to housing and community development programs.**



Homeless Assistance Grants (\$ in billions)	
FY 2004	1.260
FY 2005	1.241
FY 2006 Request	1.440

Equally clear is that Homeless Assistance Grants funding merit a substantial funding increase. Encouraged by the federal government, over 170 cities and nearly every state have initiated planning processes to organize their services to prevent and end homelessness. They have pledged both public and private state and local resources to the task. Now they are counting on the federal government to be a full partner in making their plans a reality. Enacting the President’s funding request would be an important first step.

Endorsed by:

Catholic Charities USA

Corporation for Supportive Housing

National Alliance to End Homelessness

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

National Coalition of Homeless Veterans

National Coalition for the Homeless

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness

National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness

National Health Care for the Homeless Council

United Way of America

Volunteers of America