

# Homelessness: Federal Policy

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## Homelessness in the U.S.

- About half a million people in shelters and on the streets each night
- About three times that many spend some time in homeless programs each year
- Who's overrepresented: people with extremely low incomes; Black, Native American, and Latinx people; people with disabilities; young children; LGBTQ

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Need two things to combat homelessness:

- A crisis response system to find people who are homeless, keep them safe, and get them quickly back into some kind of housing
- Progress on housing affordability more generally

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Key permanent housing interventions (the housing is permanent, although not necessarily the subsidy):

- “Diversion”
- Rapid Re-housing
- Permanent Supportive Housing

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## HUD Programs:

- Continuum of Care; Emergency Solutions Grants - Homeless Assistance Grants appropriations account (CD connection)
- Housing programs generally

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- HUD Homeless Assistance
  - For FY19, \$2.636 billion total
  - About \$1.6 billion goes for already-existing permanent supportive housing
  - Effective intervention that achieves strong results
  - New funding for PSH now comes mostly from Housing Choice Vouchers

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## Other Agency Programs:

- VA – HUD-VASH for PSH, SSVF for RRH
- HHS – Health Care for the Homeless, SAMHSA grants, Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (Medicaid, TANF)
- DoE – Education for Homeless Children and Youth
- DoL – Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project

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Biggest issue both for crisis response and for housing affordability: getting it funded closer to scale

- For crisis response, see Ending Homelessness Act of 2019 (HR 1856, Waters; S 2613, Harris) provides an extra \$1 billion a year to CoCs for 5 years – about doubles the amount available beyond renewals of permanent subsidies
- For housing affordability, a number of major bills



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## HUD Homeless Assistance Appropriations

- Current status:
  - The FY 2019 bill included \$2.636 billion
  - House FY20: \$2.8 billion (maintain existing capacity, DV initiative, youth initiative, small ESG increase)
  - Senate FY20: \$2.761 billion (maintain existing capacity [?], DV initiative, youth initiative)
- Our FY 2020 ask: \$3 billion (increase capacity in light of increasing numbers becoming homeless)

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Other important issues with advocacy payoff

- Other HUD programs
- SSVF spending
- HUD-VASH expansion – HR 2398
- Tribal CoC eligibility – HR 4029/S 2282
- Fostering Independence Act – HR 4300
- Protecting trans people in shelters – HR 3018

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