



July 11, 2025

Dear Appropriators,

As religious denominations, faith-based service providers, and members and partners of the Interreligious Working Group on Domestic Human Needs (DHN), we pray you and your colleagues in Congress will provide responsibly robust funding levels for homeless assistance and affordable housing programs in the fiscal year (FY) 26 federal budget. While our coalition members' theologies differ, this collective prayer is rooted in our shared calls to love our neighbors, serve the vulnerable, meet basic human needs, alleviate suffering, and uphold human dignity.

Following your subcommittee budget hearings reviewing the Administration's FY 26 budget request for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), we know many of you share these calls and values. We commend your bipartisan, bicameral areas of consensus, including acknowledgement of our nation's housing affordability and homelessness crises; clear-eyed concerns about how deep cuts and hasty restructuring could inflict further harm; and faithful commitment to lifting up those facing hardships and ensuring your most vulnerable constituents are served.

We bear witness to how having a safe place to call home transforms lives. We consequently raise our related budgetary concerns and hopes to your attention:

- **Housing program cuts:** Given the inflated cost of housing and other essentials for daily living, now is not the time to make deep cuts to federal affordable housing and homeless assistance programs. Houses of worship and faith-based groups provide emergency assistance to many of our neighbors facing eviction, but we cannot do this work alone. We hope Congress will maintain or expand current funding levels to prevent homelessness, including continuing funding for the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program. In a nation of abundant resources, we hope Congress hears the call to give generously.
- **Block grants to states:** We are called to serve yet know from experience with other programs that this results in less people being served. While we appreciate the Administration's concern that only a fraction of eligible people is currently served by rental assistance programs operated by HUD, this restructuring will lead to serving less people, not more. As we are called to carry each other's burdens, we should not push responsibility for this to the states. We hope Congress and HUD will find other ways to improve these programs' abilities to support people facing hardships and prevent homelessness.
- **Crisis response:** Homeless assistance programs make up small percentages of federal agency budgets and are well targeted to provide refuge and care for the most vulnerable among us, reflecting God's love. In context of record numbers of people becoming homeless for the first time during our cost-of-living crisis in recent years, attributing increased homelessness to programs that respond to the crisis has been compared to attributing increased heart disease to emergency rooms. Resourcing these crisis response programs with funding and staffing is essential. Continuums of Care (CoCs) help provide local coordination. We hope Congress and HUD will approach this with clarity and compassion and act as a stronghold to build up (not tear down or consolidate) these local crisis response systems to improve their abilities to bring peace to those who suffer. Strengthening current funding levels for homeless assistance programs is appropriators' key role in this.

- **CoC NOFO Cycle:** At this point in the year and given recent HUD communications, we hope you will support continuing the 2-year FY24 and 25 NOFO cycle for HUD homeless assistance. This change, decided in a bipartisan fashion, would prevent funding and service delays and administrative burdens. We appreciate your clarifying in recent hearings the expectation that departments will spend funds consistently with how Congress appropriates them. We hope you will continue to support this as it applies to these FY25 funds. This consistency would enable steadfast service, reflecting God's reliability and trustworthiness.
- **Supporting the elderly and disabled:** Many of our most vulnerable neighbors, including the elderly and those with disabling conditions, need permanent assistance to live with dignity. Our denominations and service organizations help support senior care and disability housing services across the country. We appreciate the Administration's language recognizing the need to take care of these groups with long-term rental assistance. However, we pray key rental assistance programs serving these populations, such as Sections 202 and 811 and Special Purpose Vouchers, are continued. We further pray the key homeless assistance program serving people who suffer from disabling conditions and have experienced homelessness for lengthy periods, permanent supportive housing (PSH), is continued. Eliminating the CoC program, which pays for PSH, would end current housing placements for 168,000 formerly homeless people.

We agree with your guidance shared in budget hearings that thoughtful, careful plans are essential for responsible governance considering the many lives at stake. While authorizers [consider reforms](#), we are grateful for appropriators' stewardship to ensure resources are provided for programs that serve your constituents in need.

Thank you for serving as a beacon of hope for our neighbors facing the hardships of housing insecurity and homelessness. We pray your collaboration is sustained and that safeguarding rental and homeless assistance is prioritized as FY 26 funding decisions are made.

Peace be with you.

Alliance of Baptists
 American Friends Service Committee
 Church World Service
 Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF)
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Faith in Action Network
 Franciscan Action Network
 Friends Committee on National Legislation
 Islamic Relief USA
 Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
 National Council of Churches
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 NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
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 The Episcopal Church
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 Union for Reform Judaism
 Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
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