

NCH . NEWS . . .

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Hello,

This is the April-May issue of NCH News.

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Why We Have to Speak for Ourselves

By: Western Regional Advocacy Project

For the latest example of politics trumping progress, we bring you this years McKinney allocations from the federal government to local communities.

You may have caught all the fanfare from the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH; the White House) and HUD as they worked the media into a frenzy of numbers, studies and press conferences when they announced the “winners” of this years homelessness funding. Local SF media got the added extra bonus of having the head of the Bush administration front squad come to town to announce that SF got everything it asked for, yet inexplicably they defined it as “extra” money???

Of the \$1.4 billion touted over and over again as the answer to homelessness in the next 10 years, 75 percent of the money went to keeping currently existing programs afloat and only 5,300 new program slots were created for homeless people nationwide. The overwhelming majority of these slots went to single adults through “chronic” initiatives being pushed by HUD and the White House.

Oh yeah, and the Public Housing operating budget and rural housing development budget got cut some more.

Neglected by the Bush administration and unreported by the media were the communities whose funding had been reduced and those who got nothing at all. Twenty-two communities that went through the whole laborious process of applying for homelessness money from the federal government received NO funding this year for their programs. And because of a bureaucratic accounting dispute between HUD and the City of Los Angeles Housing Authority, \$13 million in Shelter Plus Care supportive housing grants were denied to that community. Los Angeles, by the way, has the largest homeless population in the nation.

We can and must demand that the Bush Administration stop this blood sport that lets some communities win and some lose, that gives money to some but not to others. Every community that goes through the process of applying for homelessness funds, and documents its need, should receive funding. If HUD or anyone else tries to tell us "there is not enough money to go around," the answer should be for our representatives in Congress to allocate more, not for some communities to get less and some none at all.

This is a blood sport pure and simple. Through the ICH, millions of our tax dollars are used to promote a Bush administration agenda of dumping the federal government's responsibility for the creation and subsidization of permanent affordable housing for all poor people. Their agenda has turned homeless funding into a three card monte game, where the federal government will let you see the red card just often enough to keep you playing before it wipes you out.

Local governments have shown time and time again that when it comes to funding for poverty programs, they will not advocate for us. They are not going to bite the hand that is starving us, as that hand might have the red queen in it the next time...or the next time...or the, you get the idea.

When public policy has gotten so pathetic that even the Mayors are playing a game they know they will eventually lose, yet they keep playing it anyway, the time has come for local communities to band together and speak for themselves.

So why are so many mayors playing the game? Why are they climbing all over each other laying their 10-year plans on the card in the middle and then calling double or nothing when they lose? It's simple, really. With virtually no affordable housing funding available, the McKinney three card monte scam is the only game in town and no mayor wants be one of the anonymous 22 that got nothing, or worse yet, screwed like LA was. As one mayor said recently when we talked about this dilemma: "You may be right, but you don't control the purse strings. ICH does."

Mayors are not going to challenge HUD. They will continue to play the game and HUD will continue to deal the cards.

Our federal representatives, on the other hand, aren't dependent on HUD or the White House. They are elected by us. They need to hear us, respond to us, and deal directly with us. And we need to deal directly with them. We need them to tell HUD, "No more three card monte! Restore funding for affordable housing, and you know what you can do with the cards"

States Take Action against Homeless-Directed Violence

2007 Legislation Update on Including Homeless as Protected Class in Hate Crimes Laws

In the early 2007 legislation sessions several states were considering adding bias motivated attacks against homeless persons to hate crimes laws. Five states (Maryland, Nevada, Florida, California, and Texas) as well as the U.S. House are considering this legislation. There are many hurdles to passing this legislation which NCH and NLCHP have been working with opposing groups to allow for unimpeded passage for proposed legislation. This has led to a mixed record in regards to the passage of bills to include homeless persons as a protected class.

Senate Bill (SB) 160 in the Maryland legislature passed overwhelmingly (38-9) in the state Senate. SB 160 crossed over to the house with plenty of time for the end of the session. However, the bill failed to exit committee prior to the 9 April 2007 adjournment of the Maryland Legislature. From visits to Annapolis to lobby for the bill NCH, NLCHP, and local advocates had reason to believe given the chance, the bill would have also passed in the house. This summer NCH, NLCHP and local advocates will be meeting with Senator Mooney to discuss strategy for next year to ensure a single committee member cannot keep the bill from passing.

Assembly Bill 83 in Nevada, proposed by Representative Ohrenschild, has passed the Assembly Judiciary Committee amended to exclude prisoners from being included as homeless, as well as exclude enhanced penalties to avoid arguments on the death penalty. Prior to these amendments the bill failed committee. Thanks to the dedication of Rep. Ohrenschild the bill was amended and passed committee and now waits for a vote in the Nevada Assembly. This bill must be voted on prior to 24 April to
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amended and passed committee and now waits for a vote in the Nevada Assembly. This bill must be voted on prior to 24 April to ensure time for Senate consideration.

The Texas Legislature is also considering legislation to include homeless as a protected class. Senate Bill 536 has successfully passed committee (5-1) and is currently on the calendar of intent to be voted on. House Bill 1360, which is identical to the Senate Bill is currently in the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee. If the bill passes the Senate, the House has until 22 May to hear the bill.

California Senate Bill 122 has been set for a hearing on 24 April. The bill is currently in the Safety Committee and must pass from the Senate by 8 June. The bill was scheduled for an earlier hearing but was canceled because it was not thought to have enough votes. However, Senator Steinberg, the sponsor, has decided to have the hearing.

The Florida Legislature has bills in both the Senate and House to include homeless persons as a protected class. Senate Bill 1458 has passed the Judiciary Committee with 7 yea's and 3 nay's. The bill then moved onto the Criminal and Civil Justice Appropriations Committee where it has yet to be scheduled for a hearing. House Bill 11 has passed the Committee on Homeland Security as well as the Safety and Security Council, both unanimously. HB 11 must go through the Policy and Budget Council before it will be voted on in the house. 4 May 2007 is the last day of the session in the state of Florida. With overwhelming bipartisan support and the recent surge in bias motivated crimes in Florida this bill is promising.

Representative Johnson (TX) has contacted NCH with a request to work together on legislation on the Federal level. This was following an article read by a Legislative Assistant in her office. Jennifer Stiddard has drafted two bills to be considered by the house. One bill will add homelessness as a protected class under Federal Hate Crimes law. The other bill will add housing status to the Federal Crime Statistics Reporting Act allowing for better data collection and reporting regarding hate crimes against homeless persons. The Bills should be introduced within the next few weeks.

HUD Releases FY07 SuperNofa

HUD ANNOUNCES \$2.4 BILLION AVAILABLE THROUGH 38 GRANT PROGRAMS

Applicants strongly encouraged to update their registration to avoid a last minute crush

WASHINGTON - The Department of Housing and Urban Development today published HUD's Fiscal Year 2007 "SuperNOFA," a notice that makes available approximately \$2.4 billion in funding through 38 individual grant programs ([see attached list](#)). In launching this year's grant application season, HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson strongly encouraged prospective applicants to read the general and program-specific sections of their funding notices thoroughly and to follow the registration information available in [HUD's step-by-step registration guide](#).

"Every year, we strive to make it easier for our applicants to access the funding that can create a real difference in their communities," said Jackson. "HUD is moving full steam ahead toward [e-government](#) and we invite our applicants to become familiar with the supporting materials we've produced to streamline the submission process even more."

This year's SuperNOFA will continue the Department's push toward requiring nearly all [grant applications](#) to be submitted electronically through <http://www.grants.gov/>. Applicants seeking funding through HUD's *Continuum of Care* homeless assistance programs will not be required to submit their applications electronically.

The electronic submission process is part of President Bush's management agenda to increase funding opportunities for states, local governments and nonprofit grassroots organizations that house and serve lower income families living in their communities. Last year, more than 4,300 applicants successfully submitted their applications electronically.

This year, HUD is announcing the return of three grant programs: The Early Doctoral Research Program, the Doctoral Dissertation Research Program, and Housing Counseling Training Program.

The doctoral programs provide universities with funding for doctoral students who focus research efforts on policy-relevant housing and urban development issues. The Housing Counseling Training Program is designed to improve and standardize the quality of counseling provided by housing counselors employed by HUD-approved housing counseling agencies.

HUD is continuing to provide help so that every applicant can successfully meet this year's electronic submission requirements. [HUD's Desktop User's Guide](#) provides easy-to-follow instructions to guide applicants through the electronic submission process. In addition, HUD also offers training via webcast. For a list of training programs, visit [HUD's website](#).

GAO Release Report on Need for Section 8 Voucher Reform

Project-Based Rental Assistance: HUD Should Update Its Policies and Procedures to Keep Pace with the Changing Housing Market

GAO-07-290 April 11, 2007

In light of the pressing need for rental housing affordable to low-income households and concerns that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) may not be committed to maintaining its Section 8 project-based housing stock--a key source of such housing--Congress directed GAO to assess HUD's efforts to preserve its project-based housing and recommend ways to improve these efforts. This report discusses (1) patterns in the volume and characteristics of HUD's Section 8 project-based properties; (2) tools and incentives that are available to encourage property owners to stay in the program; and (3) the views of property owners, managers, and industry representatives on HUD's preservation efforts. To address these issues, GAO analyzed HUD data, reviewed pertinent legislation and regulations, and interviewed HUD officials and industry representatives.

GAO identified a number of patterns in the volume, characteristics, and location of HUD's project-based Section 8 housing between 2001 and 2005. During this period owners renewed 92 percent of Section 8 rental assistance contracts and 95 percent of the units covered by these contracts. While relatively few owners left the program voluntarily, most of those we interviewed did so to seek higher rents in the private market or to convert their units into condominiums. The properties most likely to leave the program were those with few Section 8 units, family-occupied units, those in poor physical condition, and those located in markets with rapidly escalating housing values. HUD offers several incentives to keep Section 8 property owners in the program. Owners that used these incentives between 2001 and 2005 most often chose the Mark-to-Market and Mark-up-to-Market programs, both of which adjust rents to conform to prevailing market conditions. Some owners used HUD programs that offered additional financing for property rehabilitation to participants in the Section 236 mortgage reduction program and the Section 202 mortgage program for housing for the low-income elderly and persons with disabilities. HUD officials, owners, and industry representatives told us that many Section 8 owners also opted to use the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and tax-exempt bonds, both of which the IRS administers through state housing finance agencies. Some property owners, managers, and industry representatives cited concerns with certain HUD policies and practices, especially the one-for-one replacement policy for Section 8 units and the Operating Cost Adjustment Factors (OCAF) payment process. GAO found that the one-for-one replacement policy, which prohibits reductions in the total number of Section 8 units in a property when a contract is renewed, had led some owners to leave the program. Property owners noted that they could not reconfigure their properties to supply larger units that were in higher demand, especially by elderly tenants. Although not required by statute to adopt this policy, HUD did so in order to preserve as many units as possible but is reviewing it in light of the growing concerns. Owners also expressed frustration with the long delay in OCAF adjustments, the use of statewide averages, and the inability of the process to deal with emergency situations. Finally, owners offered several suggestions that may warrant HUD's attention, including improving the Section 8 contract renewal guidance and revisiting physical inspection guidelines.

HUD Release Fair Housing Report

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH Over 10,000 complaints filed last year; most alleged race or disability discrimination

WASHINGTON— Government agencies received 10,328 housing discrimination complaints, the highest number ever filed in a single year, according to an annual [fair housing](#) report released today by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD's Fiscal Year 2006 report, which details HUD's enforcement efforts during the year, also found that race and disability top the list of reasons why individuals filed complaints.
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reasons why individuals filed complaints.

For the second year in a row, race and disability were virtually tied as the most common bases of housing discrimination reported to HUD and state and [local government](#) agencies funded through its Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP). Of the more than 10,000 complaints filed, 40 percent alleged racial discrimination while nearly the same percentage alleged discrimination against persons with disabilities. Complainants, according to the report, most often alleged discrimination in the terms and conditions of the sale or rental of housing, or refusal to rent.

The report was released as a part of National Fair Housing Month, which occurs every April to mark the signing of the Fair Housing Act. This year's theme, for the 39th anniversary of the law, informs housing providers and the public that "*Fair Housing: It's Not an Option...It's the Law.*"

"This report shows the importance of HUD's continued enforcement, education, and outreach activities to ensure that all Americans have access to housing opportunities," explained Kim Kendrick, HUD Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. "As diverse as this country is, we still see instances where individuals are denied housing because of the color of their skin or because they have physical disabilities that require certain accommodations. Not only is that not acceptable morally, it is against the law."

The report describes HUD's enforcement activities, including summaries of several cases that HUD or FHAP agencies investigated during FY 2006. For example:

- A case that resulted in a \$40,000 settlement for an African-American woman in Pennsylvania who was allegedly denied the opportunity to rent a house because of her race.
- A case that resulted in a \$7,500 settlement for a couple in Illinois who were allegedly denied the opportunity to rent an apartment because they had a child.
- A case that resulted in a \$15,000 settlement for a man with a disability in Hawaii who was allegedly denied permission to make structural modifications that he needed in order to use and enjoy his dwelling.

The report also details HUD's efforts to:

- Educate housing providers and the public about fair housing. For example, in FY 2006, HUD awarded Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) grants totaling \$18.1 million to 102 groups. The grants will be used to conduct fair housing enforcement and education activities in FY 2007. During FY 2006, FHIP recipients conducted 697 public events that provided 250,799 people with fair housing information. In addition, HUD launched a media campaign to inform survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita of their rights under the Fair Housing Act. Between January 1, 2006, and September 30, 2006, the campaign received the equivalent of \$1.6 million in donated media.
- Increase the stock of accessible housing for persons with disabilities. In FY 2006, HUD obtained agreements from several [public housing](#) authorities to make a share of their housing accessible to persons with disabilities. For example,

HUD entered into a Voluntary Compliance Agreement with the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). As part of the agreement, CHA will make 1,325 of its 25,000 housing units accessible for persons with mobility impairments and another 525 units accessible for persons with vision and hearing impairments. HUD also used its Fair Housing Accessibility FIRST program to train 1,185 architects, builders, developers, and other housing professionals on the accessible [design and construction](#) requirements of the Fair Housing Act.

People who believe they are the victims of housing discrimination should contact HUD at 1-800-669-9777 (voice), 800-927-9275 (TTY). Additional information is available at www.hud.gov/fairhousing.

Tax Day Rally to Support a Universal Living Wage

If all businesses paid a Universal Living Wage, we could reduce the tax burden on every single American!

5/15/2009

NCH News Email Newsletter

April 17, 2007 4:30-6 pm

Martin Luther King, Jr. Post Office

1400 L Street NW

Washington, DC

We have found that American business has grown to rely on government subsidies to pick up that portion of the basic wage that they have failed to provide. Workers have been forced in ever increasing numbers to depend on food stamps, general assistance, TANF and even the earned income Tax Credit. Congress intended these to be emergency, stop gap measures. Instead, many businesses have used these government supports to meet basic payroll. A national shift is occurring from the business responsibility of paying a "fair wage for a fair day's work" to creating an ever increasing burden on the tax payer. We know that if business paid its employees a fair living wage, we could dramatically reduce the burden to tax payers.

Tax Day Connection?

- Based on a Moral Premise: Anyone working a 40 hour week should be able to afford basic rental housing wherever that work is done throughout the US.
- People should spend no more than 30% of their income on housing (HUD standard).
- It utilizes the HUD Fair Market Rents (FMRs) which are reviewed annually and dictate local cost of housing throughout the U.S.
- Stimulates the development of truly affordable rental housing and infuses the local and national economy with new money.
- Prevents economic homelessness for all 11,000,000 minimum wage workers.
- Will end homelessness for over 1,000,000 citizens.

Universal Living Wage

Organizations & Individuals are urged to Log on and Sign the Petition!

www.UniversalLivingWage.org

For more info contact:

Michael O'Neill

National Coalition for the Homeless

NCH On The Road

Stay up-to-date on NCH's upcoming speaking events throughout the county

April and May

Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau:

The Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau is a program of the National Coalition for the Homeless that is comprised of people who are or have been homeless and works to educate the public about homelessness and what can be done to end it.

Tuesday, April 17th-Wednesday April 18th Elon University

Wednesday April 18th-Thursday April 19th College of William and Mary

Tuesday, April 24th Georgetown University

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Thursday, April 26th-Friday April 27th Seattle Pacific University

Monday, May 14th UCLA

Tuesday, May 15th UC Santa Barbara

In addition, NCH will be speaking at 31 events throughout the DC/VA/MD area

In 2006 we spoke to over 280 groups, 43 states and nearly 17,000 people. If you are interested in bringing our Faces of Homelessness Panel to your school, please contact Michael O'Neill, Speakers' Bureau Coordinator, at moneill@nationalhomeless.org.

Other NCH Speaking Events:

Wednesday and Thursday, April 11-12 Clinton School for Public Service- Concerning Proposed Multi-Service Center for Homeless People

Thursday, April 19 - Franklin College Awareness Event

Monday, April 23 Social Justice Forum on Homelessness at Del Mar College

Saturday, May 12 Homeless People's Organization in Green Bay, WI

NCH Announcements

Retraction In the March issue of NCH News, we mistakenly included a press release for the 2005 SuperNOFA. The correct press release was in regards to the 2006 Announcement of HUD's CoC Awards. This press release can be viewed in its entirety at: <http://www.hud.gov/news/release.cfm?content=pr07-017.cfm>

Couch Homeless Report In the United States there are no local estimates of "couch-homeless", also sometimes called precariously housed, doubled up, or couch surfers. They are the homeless who stay with friends and family. Although the US Census may have enumerated the couch homeless as household residents, it did not discern whether a person was homeless or a permanent household resident. There are nation-wide estimates of the couch-homeless at 1-2% of the population, but no way to estimate local populations. Using Census data, and surveys of homeless persons, rough estimates are a procedure was created to estimate the number of couch-homeless in local areas. This number varies widely from city to suburbs and from urban to rural areas. For the US overall, the estimate is 1.65% of the population is couch-homeless. To read the full report please visit the NCH website: <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/housing/Hobackreport.html>

The Homeless USA Cup 2007

When: August 9-12th, 2007

Where: Downtown Washington, D.C. Old Convention Center site at 9th and H St. NW

Participants: Homeless Players

Activities: The four-day soccer celebration of the Homeless USA Cup will not only include the 4-on-4 soccer tournament (15 minutes each, played on tennis-court sized fields), but also concerts, art displays, and exhibition games. Nearly 100 players are

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expected to participate from two dozen cities across the US.

Since 1982, NCH has been committed to creating the systemic and attitudinal changes necessary to prevent and end homelessness by involving people who have formerly or are currently experiencing homelessness in all of our work. A tax-deductible donation to NCH brings tangible results that help protect homeless people and promote social justice. Our work is innovative, cost-effective, and is creating a documented paradigm shift in how homeless people everywhere are viewed by society. A gift of \$75, \$100, \$150, \$250 or whatever you can afford will enable our critically needed work to go on. Giving to NCH has never been easier. Please log onto our secure website, www.nationalhomeless.org for additional information and to donate online.

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