

**Show Me The Money:
Increasing Resources
for Programs to
Prevent and End Homelessness**

Texas Homeless Network
17th Annual Conference
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CREATING CHAMPIONS IN CONGRESS

Make friends with your Member of Congress – support them and be a resource for them. Consider what Members of Congress care about.

- Build power and increase attention on the issue
 - Menu of Activities to build power and get attention
 - Write letters
 - Make Phone Calls
 - Get other organizations / agencies involved
 - Give them a tour of programs (a site visit)
 - Use the media
 - Meet with them in district offices and in Washington

Creating Champions (cont)

Be a resource, give them information.

They get information:

- From constituents
- From their own staff – personal v committee v district staff
- From their Congressional colleagues
- From the Media
- From Paid Lobbyists

Creating Champions (cont)

Members of Congress respond when we link our issues to issues they already care about.

Creating Champions (cont)

“The only things that we will do (Congress) are the things that you make it impossible for us not to do.”

- **Congressional staff to RESULTS** (A nonprofit, grassroots citizens' lobby that identifies sustainable solutions to the problems of hunger and poverty as a human rights issue)

FEDERAL RESOURCES
AND
POLICY CHANGE

Do we need federal resources?

What do we need?

- HOUSING

- SERVICES

- INCOME

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants

Increase funding!

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was passed in 1987 to address: permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, emergency shelter and supportive services.

Funding grew for the most part except in fiscal year 1996 and last year (fiscal year 2005).

McKinney-Vento

Homeless Assistance Grants (cont)

Several provisions have been included in the past few years:

1. Each permanent housing project funded under Shelter Plus Care (SPC) program must be renewed if the project meets minimum standards.
2. At least 30% of funds (not including SPC) must be for permanent supportive housing.
3. Applicants must coordinate with mainstream health, social service and employment programs to ensure that homeless people are receiving the benefits for which they are eligible.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants (cont)

CURRENT STATUS

- Feb 2005 – the Administration proposed \$1.44 billion, an increase of \$199 million over fiscal year 2005 level
- May 2005 – the House of Representatives passed a funding bill that would increase McKinney by \$99 million
- July 2005 – the Senate Appropriations Committee proposed an increase of \$174 million

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants (cont)

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Maybe Senate Floor, maybe Omnibus bill
- House and Senate have to negotiate a final version in Conference Committee

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants (cont)

HOW CAN WE IMPACT IT NOW?

- Senate Sign-On Letter
- Members of key Subcommittees

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants (cont)

HOW CAN WE IMPACT IT NEXT YEAR?

- Need Members to be educated on the importance of McKinney
- We want to increase it even more!

Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers

- The core housing program that helps extremely low-income people accommodate the gap between their incomes and the cost of housing
- Since 1998, it has been explicitly targeted to families and individuals with incomes below 30 percent of the median income for each community
- Helps 2 million households
- Participants pay 30 percent of their incomes for rent and the program pays the remainder up to a set maximum
- Vouchers are either tenant based or project based

Section 8 (cont)

Over the past 5 years, funding has increased significantly. Why?

- Housing costs have increased
- Vouchers replaced other assistance
- Lower income tenants
- Better neighborhoods

Section 8 (cont)

At least 75 percent of vouchers go to extremely low-income households. Why?

■ Greatest need

Nationally, the number of units renting for less than \$400 fell by 13 percent—or more than 1.2 million—between 1993 and 2003 (Joint Center for Housing Studies).

Section 8 (cont)

CURRENT STATUS – FUNDING

- Feb 2005 – the Administration proposed to increase funding for Section 8 at a level that would restore the roughly 75,000 vouchers that were cut the year before.
- May 2005 – the House of Representatives proposed **\$14.19 billion**
- July 2005 – The Senate Appropriations Committee proposed **\$14.09 billion**

Section 8 (cont)

What do the Senate and House funding levels mean?

***Increase in funding over the 2005 funding level**

***But would NOT fund all the vouchers that were lost in the last three years**

Section 8 (cont)

What about changes to the program structure?

Congress is supposed to make changes to programs by passing authorizing legislation.

The Appropriations bill do change the way that voucher funds are distributed among housing agencies.

The Senate approach is better.

Section 8 (cont)

What about changes to the program structure?

The Administration proposed sweeping changes.

The State and Local Housing Flexibility Act died. It would:

- block-grant the program
- Remove many federal protections
- Eliminate targeting
- Allow for time limits
- Restrict portability
- Give PHAs less and less money

Section 8 (cont)

What's next – now and in the future?

Urge Congress to:

- Fully fund all Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers
- Maintain the rule that targets 75% of vouchers to households making 30% or less of area median income.

An opportunity to increase local resources by being part of a national campaign.

SELHA

“Services for Ending Long-Term Homelessness Act”

(Formerly known as ELHSI)

A federal legislative initiative spearheaded by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Corporation for Supportive Housing, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, The Enterprise Foundation and the National AIDS Housing Coalition

SELHA (cont)

‘Chronic homelessness’ is defined as:

- An individual or family who is currently homeless
- has been homeless continuously for at least one year
- Or has been homeless on at least four separate occasions in the last three years
- Has a head of household with a disabling condition

Services are the essential component to permanent supportive housing.

SELHA (cont)

- Administration has set a goal of Ending Chronic Homelessness by 2012.
- HUD has increased funding for supportive housing in recent years focused on paying for the housing.
- HUD is trying to curtail funding for services. HHS is the agency responsible for health, mental health and substance abuse services.

SELHA (cont)

Why do we need a new program?

HHS has no programs that:

1. Target people who are chronically homeless;
2. Are designed to provide services in permanent supportive housing
3. Address the comprehensive needs of supportive housing residents.

SELHA (cont)

Therefore we have SELHA!

- Would authorize funding for a flexible array of services in permanent supportive housing
- 80 % of funding goes to households with disabled head of household; 20% to non-disabled families and individuals
- Would be administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration within the Department of Health and Human Services
- Requires a match - \$1 for every \$3 of federal money at first; for renewals \$1:\$1 match
- States, cities, public or nonprofit entities can apply for the grants

SELHA (cont)

BILL STATUS

Legislation introduced in House and Senate in
April 2005

House Legislation has 81 bipartisan co-sponsors

Senate Legislation has 10 bipartisan co-sponsors

SELHA (cont)

What's next for SELHA?

Get Committees to take action

More co-sponsors

Reps Barton, Hall, Burgess are important

Sen Hutchison is important

\$\$\$\$\$\$ - \$55 million

Advocating on a Parade Float

In one minute or less, communicate:

1. Who you are
2. The Policy Issue
3. Why this is important
4. What you want the Member of Congress to do

WHO CARES?

The Role of Storytelling in Advocacy

We tell stories to:

- Get people to understand what it is like to be homeless or almost homeless
- Engage both sides of the brain
- Experiment with what will sway a Member of Congress and staff
- Tell amazing stories about successes
- Challenge myths
- Allow people to be part of something bigger

Storytelling (cont)

Different kinds of stories:

1. Story of being homeless or having experienced homelessness in the past
2. Story of a relationship with someone who is or has been homeless
3. Story of why you are compelled to help homeless families and people
4. Story of your success or a program's success
5. Story of what your local community is accomplishing together

Storytelling (cont)

Accentuate the positive !

Storytelling (cont)

Emphasize the personal, not policy

Keep it real, not abstract

Stress the emotional not just the factual

Be immediate, concrete and local

Tell why this is important

Keep it short – no more than 2 minutes long

MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

- The role of the constituent
- Plan and practice – Successful Lobby Visits aren't born, they're made.
- Determine the topic for discussion and what you want to ask.
- Include a wide representation of interested parties in the meeting.
- Thank your Member of Congress for something.

Meetings (cont)

- It's a conversation.
- Getting a question that you can't answer is a blessing.
- “Pin” the Member of Congress or Congressional staff.
- Be prepared for 5 minutes or 30 minutes.
- Summarize the meeting and discuss next steps.

Meetings (cont)

Don't let it be the last time your Member of Congress hears from you.

Follow up and be persistent.

How can we work together?