



## **McKinney Reauthorization - Major Changes Proposed**

### **Legislative Status**

On April 1, 2009, legislation to reauthorize the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants program was introduced in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act - Senate bill S 808 and House number HR 1877 - is very similar to legislation introduced and acted upon but not completed by Congress in 2008.

If this legislation passes, it will go into effect 18 months after enactment.

### **Summary of Major Changes**

#### **\* Program Consolidation and Creation of New Programs**

The three programs – Supportive Housing Program, Shelter Plus Care, and Moderate Rehabilitation / SRO would be combined into a single program.

Emergency Shelter Grants would be renamed the Emergency Solutions Grant program and would receive 20 percent of total homeless assistance funding. At least 40 percent of that amount would be for homelessness prevention and re-housing activities for people who are experiencing homelessness, doubled up, living in hotels or motels, living in other precarious situations or exiting an institution.

A Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program would be created.

#### **\* Increased focus on prevention**

20 percent of the total amount of McKinney funding would be dedicated to the Emergency Solutions Grant program and 40 percent of that amount would be for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing activities.

#### **\* Increased focus on permanent housing and services for families experiencing homelessness**

Adds a requirement that at least 10 percent of total funds must be used for permanent housing for families regardless of disability.

Adds the rapid re-housing program as a priority.

Includes ‘families’ in the current definition of chronic homelessness

Adds ‘families with disabilities’ to the requirement that 30 percent of funds must be used for permanent housing for people with disabilities.

**\* Continues the commitment to provide funds for those experiencing chronic homelessness**

Adds to statute that 30 percent of total funds nationally be for new permanent housing for individuals with a disabling condition or families with an adult head of household with a disabling condition.

**\* Increases competitiveness of rural communities.**

Applicant in a rural area or a rural state has the option of applying for funds under the Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program and compete only against other rural areas. Eligible funding activities would be expanded to include homelessness prevention including minor rehabilitation and payment of back rent, mortgage, or utilities.

Funds could be used to serve those at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Applicants could use up to 20 percent of their grant for capacity building activities including grant writing.

**\* Expands the definition of homelessness**

Expands the definition of homelessness to include those who will imminently become homeless in 14 days and specifically notes families and unaccompanied youth experiencing housing stability.

Instability includes families with children and unaccompanied youth who: 1) are defined as homeless under other federal programs (such as the Department of Education's Education for Homeless Children and Youth program), 2) have lived for a long period without living independently in permanent housing, 3) have moved frequently, and 4) will continue to experience instability because of disability history of domestic violence or abuse, or multiple barriers to employment.

CoCs could also use up to 10 percent of their competitive funding to serve families with children and unaccompanied youth who meet the definition of homelessness used by the Department of Education\* or another federal agency.

CoCs with low rates of homelessness (those with fewer than 0.1% of their population homeless) could use all of their funding for the above purposes (families with children and unaccompanied youth...) 20% of CoCs would qualify.

Modifies the definition of chronic homelessness to include families with children, and in temporary institutional care facilities.