



National Coalition for the Homeless Newsletter

NCH NEWS

June 17, 2010

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Help NCH make Homelessness a Part of our Past, NOT our Future

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TODAY**

Obama Administration to Release the First Ever Federal Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) will release the nation's first comprehensive strategy to prevent and end homelessness titled *Opening Doors: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* on **Tuesday, June 22**. *Opening Doors* will serve as a roadmap for joint action by Council agencies to guide the development of programs and budget proposals towards a set of measurable targets.

Beginning in January 2010, the USICH held regional stakeholder meetings, organized federal working groups focused on specific populations, solicited public comment through an interactive website, and engaged experts from across the country to develop an action plan to solve homelessness for veterans, adults, families, youth, and children. NCH Speakers and members took part in these activities to help strengthen the USICH's understanding of issues faced by people experiencing homelessness and local communities.

USICH will announce the historic plan at the White House at 9:00 AM EDT with three Cabinet Secretaries: HUD Secretary and USICH Chair Shaun Donovan, Labor Secretary and USICH Vice Chair Hilda Solis, and VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki.

Opening Doors will be available on June 22 at www.usich.gov and www.hud.gov. Following the release, the USICH will also be hosting a live webinar to have a more in-depth discussion about the specifics of the Plan featuring Assistant Secretaries from key Council member agencies. Look for more information to be released soon.

Policy Updates

State Hate Crime Legislation Update

States are continuing to create legislation addressing violence against homeless people in their communities. In Rhode Island, both the House of Representatives and Senate passed companion [bills](#) that require police to report and monitor biased motivated crimes against homeless persons as hate crimes. Senate Bill 2323, identical to House Bill 7490, was passed by the Senate on June 11, 2010. Rhode Island Governor Donald. L. Carcieri has ten days to sign the bill into law.

Ohio legislation was introduced in May 12, 2010 by Representatives Murray and Foley. [House Bill 509](#) would create the offense of intimidation of a homeless person. If enacted, intimidation of a homeless person would raise offenses to the next higher degree. The Bill has been referred to the House of Representatives Committee on Criminal Justice.

Read NCH's position on Federal Hate Crimes legislation [here](#).

NCH Submits Comments on HEARTH Definition of Homelessness

The National Coalition for the Homeless has submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on its proposed rule to explain or elaborate the terms "homeless," "homeless individual," "homeless person," and "homeless individual with a disability" as defined in the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act. The proposed rule was published in the Federal Register on April 20, 2010 (75 FR 20541-20546).

Among its recommendations, NCH urged HUD to:

- Restore to the proposed regulatory definition of the term "homeless" the complete structure and verbiage of the statutory definition.
- Establish certification as the final step in the eligibility determination process.
- Elaborate the statutorily-prescribed additional eligibility criteria imposed on people meeting eligibility as homeless under other federal laws in a manner that includes in the HEARTH definition as many people considered homeless by other federal laws as possible.
- Restore statutory language establishing a route to eligibility for people experiencing dangerous and life-threatening conditions, and provide examples of such conditions.

- Make a declarative statement that the HEARTH Act statutory definition of the term "homeless" and its elaboration by HUD in regulation should not be construed to encompass the universe of living arrangements considered to be homeless.
- Remind recipients of HUD homeless assistance funds to utilize the statutory and regulatory definitions of the term "homeless" when administering programs and projects with HUD homeless assistance funds.
- Commit to prohibiting HUD regional offices from issuing additional "guidance" that further elaborates the definition of the term "homeless" beyond the meaning given that term by the final regulation.
- Develop electronic and print template certification instruments as a convenience for project sponsors to duplicate and use at their option.

Read NCH's full comment letter [here](#).

NCH encourages interested parties to submit their own comments on the proposed regulation. Comments are due to HUD by **June 21, 2010**. Comments may be submitted electronically at [regulations.gov](#) or by mail to Regulations Division, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th St SW, Room 10276, Washington DC 20410-0500. NCH has prepared an [action alert](#) with additional information and suggested comments.

Have you Tweeted your followers lately?

NCH summer intern George Ramos, who is attending the College of Holy Cross in Massachusetts, is our new social media guru! Another one of our summer interns, Anna Mackiewicz from Allegheny College, has written an interesting [blog post](#) this week about whether attitudes towards the homeless have changed since Dickensian times. Check it out, and find George, Anna and the rest of NCH staff daily on our [Facebook fan page](#), our [Twitter feed](#), or the [NCH Blog](#). Keep up with the latest news and with the great discussions going on across the country about criminalization of homelessness, hate crimes, affordable housing, funding for homeless services and ways that you can get more involved in your community!

The Faces of Homelessness

We've told you before about the great work that our AmeriCorps*VISTA-sponsored Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau project is doing around the country. In 2009, the VISTA members in Florida alone gave 632 presentations to 56,783 people!! By mid-July, the project will be staffed by 61 VISTA members working to create local Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureaus in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Maryland and Massachusetts. Look out for spotlights of the amazing work our VISTA members are accomplishing in future newsletters. For more information about the Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau, check out our [website](#)!

National Events

HUD Releases the Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released its annual assessment report to Congress earlier this week. The 2009 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR) is delivered at a critical moment - as the federal government continues to shift its focus toward preventing homelessness and on the even of the first-ever federal plan to end homelessness. Findings show that while the number of homeless individuals is down, the number of families experiencing homelessness has increased, most likely due to the ongoing effects of the recession. Read the full AHAR report on the [HUD website](#).

Countdown to the 2010 Street Soccer USA Cup

Have you got World Cup Fever? Well, this summer you won't have to travel to South Africa because the Street Soccer USA Cup returns to Washington, DC this July 29 to August 1st! Played during the day and under the lights in the 2,500 seat Washington Kastles stadium, (located at the corners of 11th and H ST NW) the Street Soccer USA Cup comprises an opening day Parade of States, Celebrity First Kick, live musical entertainment by Khao Cates, exhibition matches, food, and fun for the whole family! This year 200 players from 18 cities across the country will take part in the tournament. At the culmination of the tournament, the national men's and women's teams will be chosen to represent the United States at the Homeless World Cup in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. [Reserve your free tickets TODAY!](#)

HUD Publishes Super NOFA General Section

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has published a notice to provide prospective applicants for HUD's competitive funding with the opportunity to become familiar with the General Section of the department's fiscal year (FY) 2010 Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs), in advance of publication of any FY 2010 NOFAs. The notice also describes changes to HUD's policy priorities based on its new strategic plan for FY 2010-2015, as well as submission requirements for FY 2010. This information is provided to assist prospective applicants in planning successful applications.

To read the notice in its entirety, [click here](#).

For more information on HUD's grant programs, [click here](#).

Budgets are all about choices.

What kind of nation do we want in 2025? Will we be able to educate our children, provide health coverage, generate good jobs and economic security, and protect public health and safety? Will we collect enough revenues to carry out the functions of government that you believe in, or will deficits be the driving force for cuts in services? You can be part of a national forum allowing people all over the country to weigh in on these choices.

On Saturday, June 26th, thousands of Americans across the country will participate in "AmericaSpeaks: Our

Budget, Our Economy," a national town meeting to find common ground on the tough choices about our federal budget and to develop strategies on how we can ensure a sustainable fiscal future and strong economic recovery. [Sign up to attend today](#). Signing up to participate is on a first come-first-enrolled basis.

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