

# National Alliance to End Homelessness

## Alliance Online News

### December 18, 2007

POLICY | DATA + RESEARCH | TOOL + TRAINING | NEWS + MEDIA

Forward

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## Spotlight On...

### US Conference of Mayor's Report on Hunger and Homelessness

The U.S. Conference of Mayors recently released the 2007 Hunger and Homelessness Survey which covers 23 major U.S. cities. This survey collects information on emergency food assistance, emergency shelter and transitional housing, the cities' capacity to meet demand, and causes cited for hunger and homelessness in each of the surveyed cities. The major findings of the report are that, among the 21 cities that supplied data, persons in families with children constitute 23 percent of persons using emergency shelter or transitional housing, down from 30 percent last year. Approximately 76 percent were single individuals and 1 percent were unaccompanied youth. When citing causes for homelessness, the reasons listed for persons in families differed greatly from those given for individuals. For families, affordable housing, poverty, and domestic violence were the three main reasons given by the 23 cities. The reasons listed for singles were most commonly disabilities such as mental illness or substance abuse.

A majority of the cities (80 percent) surveyed in the study reported that requests for emergency food assistance increased during the last year and 82 percent expect the need for food assistance to increase in 2008. Cities reported that the top three causes of hunger were high housing costs, poverty, and unemployment. The most commonly cited way to reduce hunger was "through building more affordable housing."

As the authors of the report note, the findings in this study should be used carefully as it is considered a survey of a sample of cities and not necessarily nationally representative. Each city used different methods to respond to the questionnaire, including using administrative databases, client-level tracking systems, and extrapolation from other studies.

[2007 Hunger and Homelessness Survey](#)

## Hill Update

### Congress Moves on Appropriations

It appears Congress may be close to passing an omnibus appropriations bill for fiscal year 2008. The Democratic-controlled Congress had hoped to move forward with an omnibus bill that "split the difference" between the increases they sought and the Administration's budget. However, the President rejected this compromise, and because the Democrats could not garner enough Republican support to override the President's veto, they were forced to craft an appropriations bill that did not exceed the President's budget.

Overall, HUD programs fared very well. The new conference report funds McKinney Homeless Assistance Grants at \$1.586 billion, including \$25 million for a rapid re-housing initiative for homeless families. This funding level for Homeless Assistance Grants equals the highest funding level in any of the appropriations bills. Other HUD funding levels that remain unchanged from earlier conference reports include: \$75 million for HUD-VASH vouchers; \$6.382 billion for project-based Section 8; \$300 million for Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS; \$735 million for Section 202; and \$237 million for Section 811. The Tenant Based Section 8 program, Community Development Block Grants, and the HOME Program all received less funding than in

## ABOUT US

The National Alliance to End Homelessness is a nonpartisan, non profit organization dedicated to solving the problem of homelessness and preventing its continued growth.

[www.endhomelessness.org](http://www.endhomelessness.org)

## EXPERT Q & A

Take a five minute break from whatever you are doing to hear about emerging issues, new research, and personal stories from experts and leaders in homelessness and housing policy. This month's expert is Senator Richard Burr (R-NC).

[Take Five! Expert Q & A](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

January 10 | [Substance Abuse Treatment Models for Homeless People](#)

February 7-8 | [National Conference on Ending Family Homelessness 2008](#)

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earlier conference reports.

Last night, the House passed the omnibus appropriations bill by a vote of 253-154. The bill will now move to the Senate in the coming days. The Senate is expected to add an additional \$70 billion to the bill in order to fund the war in Iraq.

#### **Senate Passes FHA Modernization Act**

On December 14, the Senate passed S. 2338, the Federal Housing Administration Modernization Act, by a vote of 93-1. The bill is similar to H.R. 1852, which passed the House in mid-September, though there are a number of key differences. In particular, the House bill directs revenue from the expansion of the Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM) program to go to a national housing trust fund; the Senate bill does not include such a provision. Advocates will be working with members of Congress to ensure that this provision is in the conference bill agreed to by the House and Senate.

#### **National Housing Trust Fund to be Introduced in Senate**

This upcoming week Senators John Kerry (D-MA) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) plan to introduce a bill to create a national affordable housing trust fund. The bill will be very similar to H.R. 2895, which passed the House on October 10. The House bill seeks to preserve, produce, or rehabilitate 1.5 million units of affordable housing over the next ten years. A majority of the units would be targeted to families with extremely low incomes.

### [National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day](#)

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December 21 is National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day, the annual commemoration of people who have died as a result of being homeless. Since 1990, National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day has been held around the first day of winter and the longest night of the year. This day of memoriam is sponsored by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Health Care for the Homeless Council.

Local and statewide organizations are invited to hold memorials of their own. Last year, over 100 cities across the nation, from Detroit to Seattle to Washington, DC, sponsored events to honor those who had died and to recommit to the task of ending homelessness.

[Get Involved](#)

### [Third wave of former foster youth comparison study released](#)

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This month the Chapin Hall Center for Children released *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth*. The report compares the outcomes of young adults who "aged out" of the foster care system and a nationally representative sample of 21-year-olds, providing a snapshot of how former foster youth are doing during their transition to adulthood relative to their peers in the general public.

The study found that 18 percent of the group who "aged-out" of care had been homeless at least once since exiting care and over half of these young adults had been homeless more than once. Thirty- three percent of the young adults who aged out of foster care had lived in at least three different places, including 20 percent who had lived in four or more places. Additionally, seven percent of the total sample were incarcerated at the time of the interview. However, most of the young adults in the study sample had been living in fairly stable housing arrangements since their discharge from care. The largest percentage of young adults discharged from foster care were living in their "own place," which was a similar percentage to the young adults in the general public.

[Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth](#)

### [In the Media: New Orleans](#)

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[WDSU Channel 6 New Orleans](#) reports that the demolition of Lafitte, C.J. Peete, and St. Bernard housing developments will not take place this weekend, as scheduled, pending a hearing scheduled for Thursday, December 20 before the New Orleans City Council. The demolition of the B.W. Cooper development, however, is scheduled to

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continue despite protestors. Protestors have been clashing with police for a week. On Thursday, US Marshalls held the doors of the federal courthouse shut to prevent protestors from gaining access to the HUD office. Meanwhile, hundreds marched at HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson's Office in Washington, DC to protest the demolitions.

The [New Orleans City Business](#) newspaper also reported on the ongoing battle between the citizens of New Orleans and HUD. The newspaper tells the story of Sam Jackson, a leading housing advocate and New Orleans resident who pays \$370 in rent and is scraping by to care for his family. Jackson, like many residents, is dismayed by the four complexes that are scheduled to be demolished. He wants HUD to replace every demolished unit one-for-one with new low-income housing for former public housing residents. HUD doesn't plan to provide one-for-one replacements of lost units but will replace the 4,500 demolished units in the four targeted developments with 5,108 affordable homes, 3,343 public housing units and 1,765 Section 8 voucher units, for a net gain of 608 residences. Many dispute those numbers, saying that there will be a net loss of public housing units, since many were devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

The Alliance Online News will return on Tuesday, January 8.

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