



ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE, INSPIRED BY CATHOLIC SISTERS

## NETWORK Lobby's Housing Budget Priorities

NETWORK believes the federal budget is a moral document that reflects the priorities of our nation. Our budget must prioritize human needs programs, ensure funding to care for vulnerable members of our society, restore economic opportunity, and invest in community. The challenges facing our nation and our world are serious and require a serious response from government.

### The Budget Reality

Since 2010, powerful forces have converged to use the federal budget as a vehicle to lower the federal deficit by cutting social spending. These cuts are drastic and destructive, and they undermine programs that provide critical assistance to our nation's most vulnerable. Meanwhile, tax breaks for wealthy corporations and outsized military spending, which cost billions of dollars, have been expanded.

From FY 2010 through 2016, funding declined for large numbers of human needs programs. FY 2017 funding was the seventh straight year of austerity for human needs programs, driven by the multi-year caps from the 2011 Budget Control Act and further reduced by additional budget cuts. In 2018, human needs funding is set to fall by \$3 billion dollar if Congress doesn't take action to stop the cuts.

### Our Values:

- The budget is a moral document.
- Catholic Social Justice teaches us to uphold the dignity of each person as an equally valuable member of the human family.
- As people of faith, we must be in solidarity with those who are living in poverty in the struggle against structures of injustice.

### Federal Policies Must Mend Gaps, Not Widen Them

Elected officials must make budget decisions that promote the common good. This requires adequately funding programs benefiting vulnerable people while rejecting superfluous spending. Investment in human needs programs will create stronger, safer, and healthier communities and promote the common good.

**For FY 2018, NETWORK supports additional funding for life-saving housing programs.** Congress must invest in programs like the Community Development Blog Grants, HOME program, national Housing Trust Fund, and other programs designed to alleviate housing insecurity and end homelessness.

### Budget Fast Facts

#### Cuts to programs from 2010 – 2016:

- 12.4% Maternal & Child Health Block Grant
- 26.9% Rural Health Programs
- 55.6% CDC Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention & Healthy Homes
- 31.7% Low Income Home Energy Assistance
- 52.3% Housing for the Elderly
- 31.7% Community Development Block Grant Formula Grants

Coalition on Human Needs, [Most Human Needs Programs Have Lost Ground Since 2010, and Stand to Lose More in FYs 2017 and 2018](#)



25 E Street NW, Suite 200 | Washington, DC 20001  
info@networklobby.org | www.networklobby.org | www.networkadvocates.org  
www.facebook.com/NETWORKLobby | www.twitter.com/@NETWORKLobby

“We can find no social or moral justification, no justification whatsoever, for lack of housing.”

– Pope Francis to Congress, 9/24/15

## Time for Moral Leadership on Housing

**NETWORK believes that housing is a basic human right, and a foundation for a person’s ability to meet their own needs.** Right now, there is not adequate affordable housing for people with low-incomes, and there is a dire shortage for households at the extremely low- income level, at or below 30% of the area median income. Further, people often spend too high a percentage of their income on securing housing, to the detriment of other critical expenses like nutrition, healthcare, childcare, and more.

Since the 1980s, funding to ensure that all human beings have housing has been steadily decimated. The result is increased homelessness and housing insecurity. We must invest in We the People by funding affordable housing, programs to end homelessness, and infrastructure. Only then can we truly consider ourselves a civilized and successful society.

**NETWORK opposes any cuts to housing funding and the voucher program.** Having a place to live is critical to human life and dignity.

## What Congress Can Do Now

### Increase funding for housing programs in FY2018:

- Increase the number of housing vouchers to return funding for the Housing Choice Voucher Program to pre-sequestration levels, and increase it to account for inflation.
- Fully fund the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF), rental assistance programs and the Community Development Block Grant.
- Increase funds for the McKinney-Vento program for the homeless and the Rapid Re-Housing program which is demonstrating success in moving homeless people into affordable units.
- Fully fund programs for construct of new and maintain existing affordable housing units.
- Increase funding for repair and upkeep of public housing units.

**Promote tax policies that support housing:** Reform the Mortgage Interest Deduction, which costs the federal government \$70 billion a year and largely benefits the highest-income families, and reinvest the savings in a housing program like the national Housing Trust Fund or rental assistance programs which serve families with greater needs. Create a new renter tax credit to help the lowest-income renters afford decent, stable housing. Families living in renters’ credit units would pay no more than 30% of their income for rent and utilities, and the rental unit owner would receive a federal credit in return for rent reduction.

## Housing Fast Facts

**77%** of very-low-income renter households in the U.S. pay 50 – 75% of their income on housing

**56,033** formerly homeless veterans used Veterans Supportive Housing Program vouchers in 2015

Congressional Budget Office, [Federal Housing Assistance for Low-Income Households](#)

**26 /100** units available for extremely low income people versus the number needed

Urban Institute, [The Housing Affordability Gap](#)

**10,000** units lost each year due to demolition because of neglect, sale, or conversion to voucher assistance

National Low Income Housing Coalition, [Public Housing](#)