



December ??, 2025

Dear Member of Congress,

With the winter getting colder, as religious denominations, faith-based service providers, and members and partners of the Interreligious Working Group on Domestic Human Needs (DHN), **we pray you will provide responsibly robust funding levels and service continuation for homeless assistance and affordable housing in the FY 26 spending bill** to address the homelessness crisis. This collective prayer is rooted in shared calls from diverse theologies to love our neighbors, serve the vulnerable, meet basic human needs, alleviate suffering, and uphold human dignity. We have long acted on our faith, providing refuge and care to people facing homelessness.

Annually on **National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day**, which coincides with the December 21st dark winter solstice, we somberly remember those who died while experiencing homelessness over the past year. During the cold winter months, people living outside in our country are at the highest risk of dying from treatable health conditions or overdoses. We are concerned this risk will suddenly increase this winter if funding gaps cause service disruptions to HUD's homelessness programs. **We urge you to support including a provision in the next T-HUD bill that directs HUD to renew all existing Continuum of Care grants expiring during calendar year 2026 for one year.**

Although Congress approved a two-year FY24-25 CoC grant process last year that faith-based providers planned for, HUD issued a new FY25 CoC NOFO with a due date of January 14, 2026, and award date no sooner than May 1, 2026. Following lawsuits challenging it, HUD withdrew the NOFO but intends to revise and reissue it, disrupting planning and further delaying awards. Current CoC grants begin to expire as soon as January 2026: renewing them now to prevent gaps is the responsible and moral course of action. Supporting steadfast service would reflect God's reliability and trustworthiness and equip providers to cover rent, staff, and operations to keep people inside this winter.

If HUD's next NOFO reflects its last, renewing grants would also prevent HUD from placing an across-the-board cap on permanent housing programs that contradicts statutory direction, undermines local decision-making, and could result in 170,000 people who experienced homelessness in the past losing access to their current rental subsidy, housing, and services in 2026. Neighbors at risk are currently served by HUD rapid re-housing (time-limited rental subsidy and services) and permanent supportive housing (long-term housing and services for vulnerable populations).

We understand HUD's desire to use different approaches such as service-enriched transitional housing for some populations and many of us provide this. Yet, we've learned using too broad a brush in favoring programs with specific service and eligibility requirements risks not cost-effectively stewarding limited HUD resources to reach as many families; and leaving vulnerable populations without a stable roof over their heads. We also worry the time it takes to develop new housing projects and geographic shifts in where projects are funded will result in evictions and suffering.

All this compounds the record numbers of people already becoming homeless for the first time due to our country's acute affordable housing and cost-of-living crises. We are responding to the surge by serving to meet the full spectrum of our neighbors' needs. We know physical and behavioral health challenges are exacerbated when people live outdoors without their basic needs met, with deadliest consequences in the winter. **We've seen how having a safe place to call home not only saves lives but transforms them by allowing people to shift focus from survival to living out their divine purpose.** Services people want and need and faith community connections support this.

Our ministries do not have the capacity to solve this national crisis without partners. Recognizing the core responsibility HUD and the committees providing its direction, resources, and oversight have to ensure safe and stabilizing housing for our most vulnerable, we hope you will champion robust HUD funding and program continuity and seek ways to

address high housing costs and prevent evictions. To expand service capacity and support stability and flourishing, you could also champion efforts to strengthen access to Medicaid, expand SAMHSA's programs, or provide a smaller targeted new HUD funding opportunity for transitional housing for certain populations.

We are committed to putting the federal and other resources we are blessed to steward to good use: **providing dignified refuge and support that gives people the opportunity to feel God's love and access the hope, will, and agency to move forward** into brighter chapters.

We pray Congress and HUD will act as strongholds to build up and expand local homeless assistance systems across the country, enhancing capacity to bring peace to those who suffer. We pray this results in having fewer names to read of those who have died without a home in our memorial services next winter. Thank you for your service.

Peace be with you.

SIGNERS

cc: Representatives Cole, DeLauro, Womack, and Clyburn

cc: Senators Collins, Murray, Hyde-Smith, and Gillibrand