

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0552

March 17, 2020

The Honorable David Price
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, and
Housing and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, and
Housing and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

As you consider the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill, we respectfully request \$195 million in appropriations for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to advance the lessons of the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) to all Continuum of Care (CoC) communities nationwide. This investment in local communities' systems, housing, and services will reduce the number of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness and augment community resources.

Youth homelessness touches every congressional district—rural, suburban, and urban. A groundbreaking 2018 study by Chapin Hall revealed that and 1 in 30 adolescent minors ages 13 to 17 (approximately 700,000 children) will experience unaccompanied homelessness in a year, and 1 in 10 young adults ages 18 to 25 (approximately 3.5 million individuals) will also endure homelessness in any given year.

Additionally, youth homelessness is a pervasive issue in all communities with nearly identical rates of adolescent homelessness in rural and nonrural communities (4.4% and 4.2% respectfully), and higher rates but similar rates for young adults (9.2% and 9.6%). Furthermore, youth who experience even brief unaccompanied homelessness are at extreme risk. A 2017 study by Covenant Houses found that nearly one in five (19.4%) homeless youth were victims of human trafficking, of which 15% were trafficked for sex, 7.4% trafficked for labor, and 3% of youth were trafficked for both.

Congress has previously invested in the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program to pilot innovative approaches to ending youth homelessness and to serve as a blueprint for communities, service providers, advocates, and policymakers alike. Our investment is paying dividends and it is time to infuse the lessons and best practices of the YHDP into all CoCs. We respectfully urge you to provide \$195 million for comprehensive solutions to youth homelessness, allocated in the following manner:

- \$162 million for youth-specific projects, to be awarded to CoCs that can demonstrate effectiveness in ending youth homelessness. The CoC shall be required to demonstrate certain operational design and performance metrics in order for their youth-specific projects to be eligible to receive this dedicated funding.
- \$23 million for Youth Homelessness System-Change Planning Grants for CoCs that cannot yet meet the requirements necessary for the aforementioned youth-specific projects. These one-time awards shall support communities in implementing the system-change components of YHDP that have been found successful through the demonstration sites, advancing communities' knowledge and capacity to effectively serve youth experiencing homelessness. Examples of effective system components include: authentic youth collaboration in strategy, project design, and implementation; quality data collection, management, and utilization of youth experiencing homelessness; and collective ownership of a common goal to end youth homelessness as demonstrated by a coordinated plan with accountability to community-wide performance indicators.
- \$10 million for dedicated, intensive technical assistance to every CoC that receives a Youth Homelessness System-Change Planning Grant. It is critical that awardee communities are given the necessary technical expertise and support to understand and implement the lessons and practices of YHDP. Dedicated technical assistance is essential to ensuring practices are implemented quickly and with fidelity.

We believe that every young person in America should have the opportunity to live up to their potential, which necessitates having a safe and stable place to call home. This requires communities to come together to innovate, collaborate, and offer young people a variety of housing interventions—affordable housing, rapid re-housing, supportive housing, transitional housing, and emergency services—that are all thoughtfully designed and implemented to meet the unique needs of youths and young adults.

Sincerely,



SCOTT H. PETERS
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

List of signatories:

Earl Blumenauer
Tony Cárdenas
Wm. Lacy Clay
Steve Cohen
Danny K. Davis
Susan A. Davis
Diana DeGette
Mark DeSaulnier
Steven Horsford

Ann McLane Kuster
Conor Lamb
Sean Patrick Maloney
Jerry McNerney
Chellie Pingree
Ayanna Pressley
Terri A. Sewell
Donna E. Shalala
Albio Sires

Adam Smith
Darren Soto
Jackie Speier
Tom Suozzi
Rashida Tlaib
Susan Wild
John Yarmuth