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Increase in appropriation for HUD's Homeless Assistance needed to keep programs funded at current level and avoid homelessness for tens of thousands

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants serve perhaps the most vulnerable population, while achieving excellent results. Accounting issues, however, mean that if Congress keeps the fiscal year (FY) 2014 appropriation level the same as last year, HUD will have to cut grants to local programs, on top of cuts that are in process due to underfunding in FY 2013. Without an increase for this account in the final FY 2014 legislation, the result will be homelessness instead of housing for tens of thousands of people.

Homelessness in the U.S. On any given night, over 600,000 Americans are homeless. These families, veterans, individuals, and youth are truly the neediest and most vulnerable Americans. Their average income is less than half the poverty level. Some live in temporary housing or shelters run by homelessness programs; but hundreds of thousand cannot find room in a shelter and so sleep in abandoned buildings, cars, alleyways, or other places not fit for human habitation. People with severe disabilities are overrepresented among the homeless population, as are young children and veterans.

We're finding a solution. In recent years communities have made tangible progress toward solving this shameful problem, and HUD's Homeless Assistance has provided essential support. [The new approach](#) to homelessness involves solving - not just managing, the problem - through research-based interventions that save taxpayers money; and a disciplined approach that provides what is needed and not more. The result has been a substantial reduction in the number of homeless people since 2005, despite a grim economy for much of that time. Bipartisan investment in homeless assistance is paying off.

Higher appropriation needed to keep communities funded at the same level. For communities to receive the same amount of money as in 2013, Congress must increase the FY 2014 appropriation, due to [accounting issues involving expiring multiyear grants](#). Congress failed to provide enough in FY 2013 to maintain local spending – meaning *homelessness instead of housing for 111,000 Americans*. For FY 2014, if the appropriation is the same as FY 2013, that impact will be repeated, and there will be additional local cuts. “Flat funding” would mean *homelessness instead of housing for over a quarter of a million Americans compared to 2012, and an additional 32,000 even compared to 2013 after sequestration*.

[Investing in HUD Homeless Assistance means fewer people homeless.](#) It is within our power to continue reducing the number of Americans experiencing homelessness, efficiently and cost-effectively. The talented people working in HUD-funded programs around the country are doing just that. Failing to adequately fund these programs undermines that work. The account should be increased by \$330 million (as an “anomaly,” if there is a full-year continuing resolution), to maintain the momentum toward solving the problem of homelessness.