Support the Homeless Children and Youth Act of 2019
Help Homeless Children and Youth, No Matter Where They Sleep

The Homeless Children and Youth Act of 2019 is a bipartisan bill that removes barriers to HUD homelessness assistance for children, youth, and families in the following ways. It has been introduced in the House (H.R. 2001) and will soon be introduced in the U.S. Senate. The legislation:

1. Aligns HUD's definition of homelessness with those of other federal programs.

> **Why:** HUD's definition of homelessness excludes most children and youth whose families pay for a motel room, or who must stay with other people temporarily because there is nowhere else to go. These situations are unstable and often unsafe, putting children and youth at high risk of trafficking and violence. Under HUD's definition, children and youth in such living situations are not even assessed for services. Other federal programs recognize that children and youth in such living situations are homeless.
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> **How:** Children and youth whose homelessness has been verified by one of eight specific federal programs would be eligible for HUD homeless assistance. They would be able to be *assessed* for services using the same "vulnerability" indices as are used currently to prioritize people for assistance.
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> **Benefit:** Communities can assess and serve the most vulnerable children, youth, and adults. This streamlined process would eliminate paperwork, improve interagency coordination, and help leverage resources.

2. Requires HUD to score applications primarily on whether they are cost-effective in meeting the priorities and goals that communities identify in their local plans.

> **Why:** HUD has imposed strong federal incentives and requirements for certain housing models, like Rapid Rehousing, and for certain populations, like chronically homeless adults, that do not match all communities' needs. Even when communities identify greater needs for other populations or program models, they must adopt HUD's national priorities in order to be competitive for funding.
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> **How:** HUD would be required to ensure that scoring is based <u>primarily</u> on the extent to which communities demonstrate that a project a) meets the priorities identified in the local plan; and b) are cost-effective in meeting the goals identified in the local plan. HUD would be prohibited from awarding greater priority based <u>solely</u> on the specific homeless population or housing model. Local innovation and success would be incentivized.
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> **Benefit:** Communities can provide assistance tailored to the unique needs of each homeless population in their community, including models most appropriate and effective for youth and families.

3. Improves HUD homeless assistance data and transparency.

> **Why:** HUD's Point in Time (PIT) count leaves out many homeless children, youth, and families, keeping them invisible and limiting public and private action.
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> **How**: If communities conduct annual counts of homeless people, they would be required to count individuals that meet any part of the newly amended definition of homelessness. This would not require an additional PIT count, as other federal programs already are documenting homelessness for those individuals. Data collection would require communication among federal programs regarding their homeless numbers—communication that will improve interagency collaboration and leverage resources.
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> **Benefit:** Communities will have a more complete picture of homelessness among all who experience it, enabling more accurate and effective responses.

For more information about the bill and an organizational endorser list, visit https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/policy-advocacy/hcya/ or contact Barbara Duffield at barbara@schoolhouseconnection.org.

To cosponsor the House bill, please contact Mark Gilbride in Rep. Stivers' office or Katie Murray in Rep. Loebsack's office. For more information about the Senate bill, please contact Megan Harrington in U.S. Senator Rob Portman's office.