

Housing Action NH

Improving state and federal policy so everyone in New Hampshire has a place to call home.

www.housingactionnh.org

We Know How to End Homelessness.

WE SUPPORT FULL FUNDING FOR EMERGENCY SHELTERS *with* COORDINATED ACCESS IN 2016-2017 NH STATE BUDGET

New Hampshire's Bureau of Housing and Homeless Services has requested just over \$4 million a year for the next two years to fund the state's emergency shelters and intervention services. This funding will help ensure thousands of NH families, including children, the elderly and veterans who are experiencing homelessness can access a warm bed, a meal and important links to services, employment and housing options.

An emergency shelter is the last stop when someone runs out of options. We know the vital role New Hampshire's shelters play in averting human disasters every day in NH. Shelters help people get back on their feet, and at the same time, keep our communities healthier and safer, and help avoid expensive and inappropriate responses to homelessness.

WHEREAS:

- 9,557 people were provided a safe place to sleep in NH's homeless shelters in the last biennium.
- 6,724 children in NH schools were reported homeless in the last biennium.
- Without homeless shelters and intervention services, NH families, including children, would be subject to uninhabitable circumstances and risk exposure and death.
- Cuts to this program would put some homeless shelters at risk of closure. There are no administrative cuts to make.
- Coordinated access is an evidenced based model used to keep people housed, divert families from homelessness and create efficiencies in service and access to shelters.
- Two regional coordinated access programs have shown impressive results including increased diversion from shelters, efficient access to shelters and improved understanding of the homeless population.
- Moving to a **statewide model of coordinated access** in NH will be required in 2015 in order to receive \$450,000 in federal support to serve the chronically homeless and veterans and other federal resources.
- Although homelessness in New Hampshire has been slowly decreasing because of strategic investments and evidenced based practices, there have been increases in the chronically homeless and homeless veterans. These populations rely heavily on the emergency shelter system.
- Homelessness in NH is connected to the lack of affordable housing. Vacancies for rental housing in NH are very low (2.7%), rents have increased and wages have remained stagnant. Most low-income people in NH are severely rent burdened and pay more than 50% of their monthly income towards rental costs.

WE URGE:

- Governor Hassan, the NH House and the NH Senate to include **full funding** (\$4,260,405 in 2016 and \$4,347,214 in 2017) **for Emergency Shelters**, and \$50,000 in each of those years for the **Homeless Housing and Access Revolving Loan Fund** as requested by the Department of Health and Human Services in their 2016-2017 maintenance budget.
- Full funding ensures shelters are able to continue vital services, including linking individuals and families with services, employment and housing options, including the Homeless Housing and Access Revolving Loan Fund.
- The request includes funding to implement Coordinated Access in more areas throughout the state. Investing in statewide Coordinated Access will decrease homelessness, leverage additional federal resources and more efficiently use services.
- Emergency Shelters are the very bottom of NH's fraying safety net and should not be cut or short-changed.
- Without homeless shelters and intervention services, NH families, including children, fall to other more expensive programs including group homes, hospital inpatient programs, costly state incarceration and local welfare.

RESPECTFULLY SIGNED,

[LIST ALL HOUSING ACTION NH MEMBERS <http://housingactionnh.org/who-we-are/members/>]

[PLUS ADDITIONAL ORGS AND INDIVIDUALS, WITH LOCATION]