Rental Housing Support Program
Rules, Comments, and Hearings

The Rental Housing Support Program (RHSP) Act was established to help localities address the need for decent, affordable, and permanent rental housing. The Program allows the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) to make grants to local administering agencies in order to provide subsidies to landlords, which will enable landlords to charge rent that is affordable to very low and extremely low income households. Grants under the Program may also be made directly for long term operating support for the development of affordable rental housing.

The proposed rules for RHSP have been released in the April 14, 2006 issue of the Illinois Register. The first public notice period for the Rental Housing Support Program will expire on May 29, 2006.

Two public hearings will also be held. The first hearing will be held on May 10th at 2pm at IHDA’s offices, 401 N. Michigan Ave., 9th Floor, in Chicago. The second will be held on May 12th at 10am in Springfield at 401 South Spring Room 349C, the 3rd Floor of the Stratton Building. Speakers are asked to provide written copies of comments stated at the public hearings.

Final rules are to be published by June 2006. The request for proposals will be issued in July. Program contract awards will be made in Spring 2007.


McKinney-Vento Reauthorization and Consolidation Plans

Two bills reauthorizing the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act have been introduced in Congress. S. 1801, sponsored by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) was discussed in the August 2005 issue of Homeless Headlines. (www.icaanet.org/homelessheadlines/hd_aug05.pdf) and H. R. 5041.

H.R. 5041

On March 29, Representative Rick Renzi (R-AZ) introduced, by request of the Administration, H. R. 5041, The Homeless Assistance Consolidation Act of 2006. The bill proposes to reauthorize, and make significant statutory changes to, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Programs.

The legislation would amend the purpose of the McKinney Act to:

(Continued on page 7)
Media Workshop

The nonprofit Community Media Workshop is putting on a conference June 8 in Chicago to help nonprofits learn how to be more effective in getting their organization’s work in the news. Experienced nonprofit communicators facilitate panel discussions among journalists from national and local news outlets. Reporters and editors at the conference work at local, regional, and national news outlets and come from Springfield and the Chicago region. Members of Housing Action Illinois can register for the conference for a significant discount. Special room rates of $50/night are also available for people registering before April 24.

Registration information: Danae@housingactionil.org. Program information: www.newstips.org/interior.php?section=CalendarSub&main_id=599.

While there is public support for increasing the minimum wage, Senator Kennedy has been unable to get the Fair Minimum Wage Age scheduled in the Senate. With citizen co-sponsors, ACORN and Senator Kennedy hope to be able to move the legislation to the Senate floor for a vote in this Congress. For further information, see: http://kennedy.senate.gov/newsletter/mwcitizensponsor.cfm.

Meanwhile in the House, Democrats are urging signatories on a “discharge petition,” House Resolution 614 introduced by Representative John Barrow (D-GA), that would force a debate and vote on the federal minimum wage if a majority of lawmakers in the House sign it. If the petition reaches its goal of 218 of the 435 members, it would force a vote on H. R. 2429 introduced by Representative George Miller (D-CA) that raises the federal minimum wage from $5.15 to $7.25, similar to the Senate measure. To see which Representatives have signed the petition, see: http://clerk.house.gov/109/lrc/pd/petitions/Dis11.htm.

Legal Guide to Development

The American Bar Association has published a new guide on affordable housing law, sponsored by its Forum Committee on Affordable Housing and Community Development Law. The guide looks at a wide variety of issues from the broad regulatory foundations of affordable housing development to the specifics of such things as affordable housing finance, local building codes and zoning law. According its editors, Tim Iglesias and Rochelle E. Lento, this book is targeted at a broad range of attorneys on every side of the issue.


Minimum Wage

The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) and Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) are working together to raise the federal minimum wage. They are recruiting citizen co-sponsors to support Senator Kennedy’s Fair Minimum Wage Act, S. 1062.

The current federal minimum wage is $5.15, or $10,700 per year, for a full time worker. This is $6,000 below the national poverty line. S. 1062 would raise the federal minimum wage to $7.25 over two years. NLIHC’s Out of Reach 2005 provides a direct comparison between rental housing costs and income levels. The report shows that, nationally, the Housing Wage for a two-bedroom rental unit is $15.78. This is the amount someone would have to earn per hour, working full time 52 weeks a year, to afford the national average Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment.
Defining the Poverty Rate

Using alternative methods for defining and calculating the poverty rate can significantly change the percentage of households who fall below the federal poverty line. A recently released report by the Census Bureau, “The Effects of Government Taxes and Transfers on Income and Poverty: 2004,” examines poverty in America using four alternative methods for defining and calculating the U. S. poverty rate.

Each year the Census Bureau reports on the percentage of Americans living in poverty. The most recent report, released in August 2005, reported a poverty rate of 12.7 percent in 2004. The official poverty rate is determined using a method developed in 1964. This method is controversial for two main reasons. First, experts do not agree on the most accurate way to measure income. The current method takes into account cash income before taxes. Experts question whether non-cash income such as food stamps and housing subsidies, government cash income such as social security and Earned Income Tax Credit, or wealth accumulation such as capital gains or home values, should be counted as income, and whether income should be measured before or after taxes. Second, experts do not agree on what the poverty threshold should be. The current poverty line is determined as a multiplier of the cost of food. Since the time that this multiplier was established, the relative cost of food has fallen while the relative cost of other household expenses such as work related expenses like transportation or child care has risen. Experts also question the way in which the poverty threshold varies according to family size.

The Census Bureau report attempts to address, but not resolve, some of these issues by calculating a poverty rate using four different definitions of income, and using a different calculation for the relationship between poverty threshold and family size. As compared to the official 12.7 percent poverty rate, these alternative calculations find a poverty rate as low as 10.4 percent and as high as 19.4 percent.


Making the Connection
Advocacy 101
Contributor: DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform

The authors of this column welcome your comments and questions. See contact information at the end of the article.

In the world of human services, there will always be more services to obtain, more barriers to overcome, and more rights to be enforced for vulnerable people. Most human services staff find themselves hearing or using the term “advocate” frequently, often not knowing how to be an effective advocate. This is the first of a series of articles on advocacy, where experienced advocates will share what they’ve learned.

An effective advocate needs both information and skill. The advocate must possess a balance of information regarding the program, policies, rules, jargon or issues at hand. He or she must combine this information with excellent people and process skills to produce the change needed. Advocacy is a learning process, and here are some lessons we have learned along the way.

1. Nothing is impossible. President John F. Kennedy said “Our problems are man-made, therefore they may be solved by man. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings.” Any problem created by mankind can be solved by the organized, focused efforts of caring people.

2. Keep your eye on the money. Often systems will complain that they don’t have enough money to do what you want. In fact, systems have lots of money. They are, however, spending it on other things. Look for opportunities to redirect spending to more desirable targets.

3. Weigh and measure the problem. A first step in assessing a problem is to gather data on it. Consider inventories of existing resources, needs, surveys of samples of consumers, etc. Numbers are powerful! Ask questions such as:

   - How many people have this problem? Where are they?
   - How much will it cost to solve it?
   - How much will it cost if we don’t solve it?
   - Where is the money going now?

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Veterans Employment and Training Service
New Grantee Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program  pp. 20504–20515
The closing date for receipt of the application is May 22, 2006 at 5 p.m. (eastern time). HVPR grants are intended to address two objectives: (1) To provide services to assist in reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force, and (2) to stimulate the development of effective service delivery systems that will address the complex problems facing homeless veterans. Successful applicants will design programs that assist eligible veterans by providing job placement services, job training, counseling, supportive services, and other assistance to expedite the reintegration of homeless veterans into the labor force. Successful programs will also be designed to be flexible in addressing the universal as well as the local or regional problems that have had a negative impact on homeless veterans reentering the workforce. Under this solicitation covering Fiscal Year (FY) 2006, VETS anticipates that up to $1,400,000 will be available for grant awards up to a maximum of $200,000 for each grant award. VETS expects to award approximately seven (7) grants.

Urban Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program  pp. 20494–20504
The closing date for receipt of the application is May 22, 2006 at 5 p.m. (Eastern Time) Targets homeless veterans in the metropolitan areas of the 75 largest U. S. cities listed in Appendix G. HVPR grants are intended to address two objectives: (1) To provide services to assist in reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force, and (2) to stimulate the development of effective service delivery systems that will address the complex problems facing homeless veterans. Successful applicants will design programs that assist eligible veterans by providing job placement services, job training, counseling, supportive services, and other assistance to expedite the reintegration of homeless veterans into the labor force. Successful programs will also be designed to be flexible in addressing the universal as well as the local or regional problems that have had a negative impact on homeless veterans reentering the workforce. Under this solicitation covering Fiscal Year (FY) 2006, VETS anticipates that up to $1,400,000 will be available for grant awards up to a maximum of $200,000 for each grant award. VETS expects to award approximately seven (7) grants.

Non-Urban Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program  pp. 20474–20484
The closing date for receipt of the application is May 22, 2006 at 5 p.m. (eastern time) The only jurisdictions that are eligible to be served through this non-urban competition for HVPRs are the geographical areas in the United States other than the metropolitan areas of the 75 U. S. cities largest in population. HVPR grants are intended to address two objectives: (1) To provide services to assist in reintegrating homeless veterans into meaningful employment within the labor force, and (2) to stimulate the development of effective service delivery systems that will address the complex problems facing homeless veterans. Successful applicants will design programs that assist eligible veterans by providing job placement services, job training, counseling, supportive services, and other assistance to expedite the reintegration of homeless veterans into the labor force. Successful programs will also be designed to be flexible in addressing the universal as well as the local or regional problems that have had a negative impact on homeless veterans reentering the workforce. VETS (Continued on page 5)
With three quarters of a million parents in prison, children face disrupted parent-child relationships and altered networks of familial support.

Additionally, new burdens are placed on governmental services such as schools, foster care, adoption agencies, and youth-serving organizations.

This article reviews the cost to society of parental incarceration. It also examines by age group the effects on children when parents are incarcerated.

Link: www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/310882_families_left_behind.pdf

Another three-page paper updates HAC’s background paper, Rural Rental Housing Prepayment and Preservation (January 2006).

Both papers are available at www.ruralhome.org.

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Both papers are available at www.ruralhome.org.
Advocacy 101
(Continued from page 3)

- What resources are currently devoted to this problem?
- Is there any way to save some of the money currently being spent?

3. It never hurts to ask.
Programs are under constant change. Sometimes administrators are able to be flexible to meet a need if they are made aware of it. They may also know of other ways to meet the need.

4. There’s (almost) always more than one right answer – and it doesn’t always have to be mine!
There are almost always several ways to solve a problem, and the first answer we think of isn’t necessarily the best.

5. If it was easy, it would have already been done.
Many of the problems we work on are difficult ones that have been resisting solution for many years. Don’t be too hard on yourself - or your predecessors!

6. Know your enemy!
Find out who benefits from the status quo. The folks looking to redirect funds need to assess the relative power structure, and figure out who are the forces working to maintain things the way they are.

7. Say please and thank you. Especially thank you!
You can disagree without being disagreeable. Be sure you remember to keep a constructive relationship with the folks who run the system. They’re not usually bad people, and often share the same values you do. Dialogue such as “maybe you’ll disagree with me, but this is how it looks to me...” or “I know you’re as frustrated as I am... How can we change this?” or “This is an issue on which reasonable people can disagree...” better facilitates relationships.

8. Is this hill worth dying on?
The military makes an estimate of projected casualties before every invasion. Sometimes, they’ll change tactics to one that might result in fewer casualties. It’s worthwhile for us to ask: is winning worth what it’ll cost us?

9. First, do no harm.
Our friends in the medical profession are aware of the potential for harm in any intervention. Think how your efforts during the entire change process could effect the consumer.

An example of this occurred when a community group was working to reorganize child support so that the whole system was under a single chain of command. However, the system took too long to get this accomplished, and much of the current staff got upset with the insecurity, and the prospect of change, and quit. For several months, the clients actually received worse service than before the whole effort started.

10. Remember the ‘woman in the waiting room.’
Make sure that everything you do actually makes things better for the consumer.

For example, an advocacy group asked for office space in the local welfare office. Their staff benefitted because they saw the clients in the waiting room ever day, and formally interacted with clients and staff. This helped them to remember who they were working to help.

11. If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.
Sometimes a particular effort may take more than one try. If you fail the first time out, retreat, regroup, analyze why it didn’t work and try again. Ask yourself: Who else needs to be involved?

As an example, a community group was working to develop an option to provide health care for the uninsured working poor. An existing program became worried that this effort would threaten their funding, and worked behind the scenes to derail the new effort. When the organizers of the new program realized this, they worked to better include the program in the planning for the expanded effort. They all ended up speaking with one voice to funders and decision makers.

12. “You can get a lot done if you don’t care who gets the credit.”
Harry Truman spoke wisely! The advocate has to have the smallest ego - and the biggest brain - in the room.

For example, an advocate was working with several government agencies to solve a problem that had been costing $700,000 a year for decades. She and her boss crafted a solution, and convinced decision makers to implement it. Later, a high level executive who had been marginally involved publicly took credit for the solution. The advocate was pleased, because the person who took credit was crucial to the long term success of the effort.

13. Sometimes you just have to hold your nose and move on.
Sometimes, despite your best efforts, it’s just not gonna change at this moment. You might decide to give this issue a rest and circle back to it later. Timing can be everything!

The DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization focused on advocacy and planning in DuPage County, Illinois and designer and trainer of Making the Connection: A Guide to Accessing Public Benefits. Questions can be directed to knelson@dupagefederation.org or cking@dupagefederation.org.
create a unified, performance-based process for funding; encourage collaboration and planning; focus the public and private sector on ending and preventing homelessness; assist people in transitioning from homelessness and prevention; and consolidate existing homelessness programs.

Finding that, “an effective plan for reducing homelessness should provide a comprehensive housing system (including permanent housing, transitional housing, homelessness prevention and emergency shelter) that recognized that, while some individuals and families experiencing homelessness attain economic viability and independence utilizing transitional housing and then permanent housing, others can become self-sufficient by moving directly to permanent housing,” the legislation would codify a 30 percent set-aside of McKinney dollars for the creation of permanent housing. As has been made law in the past eight HUD appropriations bills, the funding would be targeted towards people with disabilities but, unlike in previous years, would include families with a disabled adult member in the definition of those eligible.

The bill would codify the Continuum of Care (CoC) process, by requiring communities to create a CoC board, a private nonprofit organization or an organization that, by some other means, is an established legal entity. This board, through the appointment of an agent, will, among other things: design a collaborative process to apply for grants; distribute awarded grant funds; require that those awarded grants implement and maintain outcome based evaluations of projects and provide; ensure that funded agencies are participating in the Homeless Management Information System; and arrange for annual audits of the financial records of each funded project. In addition, the board would be required to provide an independent outcome-based evaluation of the CoC board’s homeless assistance planning process, to measure the progress the board is making toward ending chronic homelessness and in preventing or ending homelessness in their community. Not less than 65 percent of the board’s composition would be a combination of people experiencing homelessness, advocates, service providers, local businesses and representatives of philanthropies, and the rest would be government agency officials.

The HUD Secretary would be given authority to ensure that each CoC board satisfactorily carries out recordkeeping and reporting requirements and may audit the financial records of the CoC board. The Secretary would also be required to periodically conduct performance evaluations, and make determinations to adjust, reduce, or withdraw grants as a result of the evaluation.

The bill would also, among other things: create from three currently existing McKinney programs a single funding stream, the Community Homeless Assistance Program, with a unified application process; allow communities to use up to 10 percent of their grant funding for homelessness prevention programs; eliminate the 30 percent cap on the amount of ESG that can be used for services; and require a cash match of 25 percent for all funded activities.

The bill would allow for “essential” services, defined as those concerned with employment, health or education, family support services for homeless youth, alcohol or drug abuse prevention or treatment, or mental health treatment, to be funded through the Emergency Shelter Grants Program. Services to be funded through the Community Homeless Assistance Program must be “directly relevant to assisting persons experiencing homelessness to access and retain housing,” both for new projects and for those receiving renewal funding.

H. R. 5041 has been referred to the House Financial Services Committee. A bill in the Senate to reauthorize McKinney Vento Programs, S. 1801, the Community Partnerships to End Homelessness Act of 2005, received a hearing in the Subcommittee on Housing and Transportation of the Senate Banking Committee on March 30 (see following article).

H. R. 5041 and S. 1801

On March 30, the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Housing and Transportation held a hearing entitled, “McKinney-Vento Act Reauthorization and Consolidation of HUD’s Homeless Programs.” The Community Partnerships to End Homelessness Act of 2005, S. 1801, introduced by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), Ranking Member of the Subcommittee (see Memo, 9/30), and H. R. 5041, introduced by Representative Rick Renzi (R-AZ) (see above), were the main topics of discussion.

Witnesses included: Roy Bernardi, HUD Deputy Secretary; Philip Mangano, Executive Director of the U.S. Interagency Council on the Homeless; Gail Dorfman, County Commissioner of Hennepin County, Minnesota; Steve Berg, Vice President for Programs and Policy, National Alliance to End Homelessness; Charles Gould, Volunteers of America; Anthony Love, Houston Coalition for the Homeless; and Dennis Culhane, Professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

Senator Wayne Allard (R-CO), Chair of the Subcommittee and a cosponsor of S. 1801, described the Community Partnerships to End Homelessness Act of 2005 as, “combining the efficiency of a block grant with the accountability of a competitive system.” Senator Reed said the bill will not only reauthorize the McKinney-Vento programs, but would “codify improvements already made throughout the years by HUD.”
**Private Resources**

by Pamela M. Salela, Coordinator, Central Illinois Nonprofit Resource Center
telephone: 217-206-8633 - email: psale2@uis.edu - url: library.uis.edu/findinfo/grants/index.html

The Blowitz-Ridgeway Foundation
1701 East Woodfield Road
Suite 201
Northfield, IL 60173
Telephone: 847-330-1020
FAX: 847-330-1028
URL: www.blowitzridgeway.org

**Contact:** Laura Romero, Program Associate

**Areas of Interest:** Early Childhood Development, Nursery School; Tutoring/Mentoring Programs; Literacy; Health Care - General and Rehabilitative; Health Facilities (including hospitals); Family Planning; Women’s Health Issues; Public Health; Mental Health Treatment; Crisis Intervention, Hotline; Rape Victim Services; Disease, Disorder, Medical Disciplines; Birth Defects; AIDS/HIV; Employment, Jobs; Welfare-to-Work; Food, Nutrition, Agriculture; Food Distribution, Food Banks; **Housing, Shelter**; Youth Development; Youth Centers and Clubs, Multipurpose; Adult Child Pairing Programs (e.g., Big Brothers); Human Services; Children and Youth Services; Family Services (Counseling and Support); Disabled Persons’ Services; Women’s Centers, Services; **Homeless Centers, Services**.

**Types of Support:** Challenge Grant; General, Operating Support; Capital Campaign; Construction, Renovation; Program, Project Support.

**Geographic Focus:** Primarily Illinois.

**Targeted Beneficiaries:** General Public; Children and Youth; Physically, Mentally Disabled; Ethnic and Racial Minorities; Asians, Pacific Islanders; African Americans; Latinos; Native Americans, American Indians; Females - All Ages; Crime, Abuse Victims; Families; Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgendered; Poor, Economically Disadvantaged, Indigent; **Homeless**.

**Limitations:** No political organizations, religious organizations or tax supported institutions.

**Application Information:** Applications are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Call or write for information packet and application form.

Elick and Charlotte Lindon Foundation
2500 Indigo Lane
Unit 337
Glenview, IL 60025
Email: clindon@aol.com

**Contact:** Charlotte Lindon, President

**Areas of Interest:** Education; Group Home, Residential Treatment; Mental Retardation and Developmentally Disabled; Cancer; **Housing, Shelter**; Multipurpose Human Service Organizations; Children and Youth Services; **Family Violence Shelters and Services**; Emergency Services (Food, Clothing, Money, Transportation, etc.); Senior Centers, Services; Disabled Persons’ Services; **Homeless Centers, Services**.

**Types of Support:** General, Operating Support; Capital Campaign; Equipment, Furnishings, Materials; Emergency Funds; Program, Project Support; Seed Money, Start up Funds; Religious Organization Support. **Geographic Focus:** Primarily Illinois.

**Targeted Beneficiaries:** Aging, Elderly, Senior Citizens; Physically, Mentally Disabled; Poor; Economically Disadvantaged, Indigent; **Homeless**.

**Limitations:** No political organizations.

**Application Information:** Request an application form. **Preferred Method of Initial Contact:** Concept Paper; Request for Guidelines; Letter of Inquiry (or email).

(Continued on page 7)
Mr. Bernardi agreed that S. 1801 represents, “a significant step forward,” and described similarities between S. 1801 and H. R. 5041. He said both bills would consolidate three of the major McKinney programs, affirm local decision making, simplify the grant application process and compress the time it takes for grantees to receive federal dollars for their projects. He emphasized, however, that there are significant differences between the bills. Unlike S. 1801, Mr. Bernardi said, the Administration’s bill would: require broader participation in a local Continuum of Care (CoC); mandate greater accountability from CoCs by requiring that they be established legal entities; direct resources towards ending chronic homelessness; and allow for greater flexibility for spending on services. The Administration’s bill, Mr. Bernardi said, “better targets permanent housing resources to the disabled, and those with the fewest resources.” Specifically, he said, H. R. 5041 targets 52 percent of resources towards the chronically homeless and 47 percent toward all others experiencing homelessness.

Every person testifying supported setting aside 30 percent of McKinney funds for the creation of permanent housing. Several witnesses supported the component of S. 1801 that would expand the definition of chronic homelessness to include families with a disabled head of household. Mr. Gould urged the Committee to ensure that the HUD definition of who is homeless include persons who are doubled up or living in hotels or motels due to a lack of adequate alternative housing.

Outside the hearing, analysts have noted other differences between the House and Senate bills on issues including HUD’s “hold harmless which, in effect, extends the “pro rata” funding allocation for Continuums to allow one year grants for all renewal projects for a given Continuum when the total of the renewals exceeds the standard pro rata amount. Bob Palmer of Housing Action Illinois reports that sources at the National Alliance to End Homelessness have said that Senator Reed’s S. 1801 allows the HUD Secretary the discretion to increase the pro rate need estimate—just as currently is the practice. The Bush Administration’s H. R. 5041 reportedly doesn’t spell out the pro rata need formula, but instead leaves it up to the Secretary to come up with a methodology for determining need, and whether there would be a “hold harmless” procedure.

For further information, contact the National Low Income Housing coalition or the National Alliance To End Homelessness at the address in Headlines Directory.

McKenna Foundation
141 West Jackson Boulevard
Suite 1650
Chicago, IL 60604-3070
Telephone: 312-408-4393
URL: www.mckennafoundation.org

Contact: No information available.

Areas of Interest: Arts/Culture/Humanities; Museums; Education; Education Advocacy; Early Childhood Development, Nursery School; Elementary School (K-8); Secondary School (9-12); Special Education; Tutoring/Mentoring Programs; School Reform; Technical School Education; Colleges, Universities; Continuing Education; Literacy; Drop-out Prevention; Health Care - General and Rehabilitative; Health Facilities (including hospitals); Disease, Disorder, Medical Disciplines; Protection Against Domestic Abuse; Protection Against Child Abuse; Nutrition; Housing, Shelter; Youth Development; Human Services; Children and Youth Services; Family Services (Counseling and Support); Family Violence Shelters and Services. Types of Support: Contact foundation for specifics. Geographic Focus: Illinois. Targeted Beneficiaries: Children and Youth. Limitations: No capital or endowment campaigns, political organizations Application Information: See foundation website.