

Shelter Plus Care Renewal Sign-On Letter

Several national interest groups, including the U.S. Conference of Mayors and NCDA, are requesting Congress to shift the Shelter Plus Care renewals into HUD's Section 8 line item this year. As a part of this effort, NCDA is asking each of its members involved in the Shelter Plus Care program to forward this letter to each of their Senators and Representatives. Please forward a copy to Vicki Watson either by e-mail at vicki@ncdaonline.org or by fax at 202-887-5546. We are hopeful that if we garner enough grassroots support that Congress will shift the renewals this year. If you have any questions, please call Vicki Watson at 202-887-5532.

Dear Senator/Representative:

The **[your organization/agency name]** is writing to request that you address an issue that threatens local efforts to combat homelessness in **[your city/county/state]**. *Please support efforts to make McKinney Shelter Plus Care funding permanently eligible for renewal from the Section 8 Housing Certificate Fund rather than the yearly McKinney appropriation. In addition, please support the appropriation of \$37 million to the Housing Certificate Fund for this purpose in FY 2001, as requested in the President's budget. These measures are both urgently needed before Congress adjourns.*

First, continuing to fund Shelter Plus Care renewals out of the current year McKinney appropriation risks returning to homelessness thousands of our nation's poorest and most disabled citizens. The Shelter Plus Care program has provided over 28,000 rent subsidies that enable local governments and their non-profit partners to provide housing linked to needed support services for homeless persons with disabilities, including mental illness, chronic substance addiction, and HIV/AIDS. Without renewal of these rent subsidies, Shelter Plus Care programs nationwide will be unable to afford to house their current tenants, exposing these vulnerable persons to eviction and a return to the streets and emergency shelters. *In FY 1999, these disturbing trends culminated in a lack of renewal funding for \$23 million (900 units) in Shelter Plus Care programs across the country.*

Second, the Shelter Plus Care renewal crisis threatens all McKinney-funded homeless housing and services programs, including successful programs operated here in [your city/county/state]. Unless a stable, secure source of funding can be established for the \$654 million in Shelter Plus Care up for renewal in the next four fiscal years, localities around the country will continue to face the grim choice of de-funding existing programs or failing to develop needed new housing and services for the homeless.

Accordingly, **[your organization/agency]** asks for your support in providing a permanent solution to the McKinney Shelter Plus Care renewal crisis by including these rent subsidies among those funded by the Section 8 Housing Certificate Fund in FY 2001 and for future years. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact **[contact person]** at **[phone number]**.

Sincerely,