



NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

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Policy and Legislative Update: Budget Season

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It's budget season. Fiscal Year 2015 budgets have recently been released by various groups in Washington, as lawmakers, the executive branch, and outside organizations publish their thoughts on what the fiscal future of the country ought to be.

For the last several years, NCHV has contributed to the Independent Budget, written by the Independent Budget Veteran Service Organizations (IBVSO's), including AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. We were proud to continue the tradition this year as well, serving as advisors for the homelessness section. The document serves not only as the representation of what the IBVSO's consider important, but also as an educational document for lawmakers – written by subject matter experts. Besides the section of educational materials about programs and policies, the independent budget contains policy and funding recommendations. Some of those concerning veteran homelessness included:

- Continued stable funding levels of all homeless veteran assistance programs, and sufficient and sustained resources above those levels where necessary
- In particular, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) should be funded at no less than its current \$300 million. Furthermore, the authorization cap should be removed, allowing the Secretary of the VA to re-appropriate unused monies into the SSVF account
- A full appropriation of \$50 million for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP)
- The incremental buildup of HUD-VA Supportive Housing should continue through 2015, to include additional project-based vouchers for veterans in areas with a high concentration of chronically homeless veterans
- Permanent authorization of the National Center for Homelessness Among Veterans, the research arm of the VA for homeless veteran issues and the programs in place to serve them

Mission: The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans will end homelessness among veterans by shaping public policy, promoting collaboration, and building the capacity of service providers.



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The Independent Budget was released alongside the Obama Administration’s budget, and NCHV was gratified to see that many of the same funding levels were called for in both documents. Some of those levels appearing in the Presidential budget even reflected changes that NCHV began to advocate for after the writing of the Independent Budget. The President called for the following funding levels:

- Grant and Per Diem (GPD): \$250 million
- Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF): \$500 million
- Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP): \$38.109 million
- HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH): \$75 million, an additional 10,000 vouchers

These budgets are not binding documents, nor is the congressional budget passed by the House Budget Committee in early April. Still, they are important markers along the path to appropriations – and they indicate that the administration and community are sticking by their commitments to the fight to end veteran homelessness.