

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

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Contact: Maggie Ardiente
Communications Director
202-638-2535 ext. 108
mardiente@nlchp.org

HUD Prioritizes Funding for Communities Taking Steps Against Criminalization of Homelessness

(July 18, 2018, Washington, D.C.) – For the fourth time since 2015, the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) is encouraging communities to decriminalize homelessness. Last month, HUD issued its annual Notice Of Funding Application (NOFA) for its \$2.2 billion grant stream for Continuums of Care – the public/private collaboratives that provide homeless services across the country. The funding application offers additional points to communities that document the steps they are taking to combat the criminalization of homelessness.

“We welcome HUD’s continued incentive to local governments to turn away from destructive policies that criminalize homelessness and make ending it that much harder,” said Maria Foscarinis, executive director of the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (the Law Center).

In conjunction with the new application, the Law Center published a toolkit which tracks applicants’ responses over the first three years the question has been asked. The report shows that communities have responded positively to HUD’s inclusion of this question on its NOFA by reporting additional activities to discourage criminalization, highlight trends, share a number of emerging model responses, and provide tools for communities looking to do more.

“With visible homelessness increasing in cities across the country, communities are looking for solutions,” said Eric Tars, senior attorney at the Law Center. “With this toolkit, we hope to emphasize that HUD is rewarding communities that develop solutions that are constructive and help end homelessness, rather than criminalize it, and share the examples of good and effective work being done.”

The Law Center has [reported](#) in the past on the dramatic increase in criminalization of homelessness across the country, as well as the significant negative impacts criminalization has on both individuals and communities.

The toolkit was introduced in a webinar today. View the recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBXv97bE6ME&feature=youtu.be>

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The [National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty \(the Law Center\)](#) is the only national organization dedicated solely to using the power of the law to prevent and end homelessness. With the support of a large network of pro bono lawyers, we address the immediate and long-term needs of people who are homeless or at risk through outreach and training, advocacy, impact litigation, and public education.