

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 21, 2013

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New HUD Homelessness Data Offer Incomplete Picture

Data excludes many lacking housing in weak economy

Washington, D.C. - Today the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released new data indicating that 610,042 people were homeless as of January 2013, a decrease of 3.8 percent from the 2012 numbers. HUD attributes this decline to progress made in implementation of *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan To Prevent And End Homelessness*. Maria Foscarinis, Executive Director of the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, said "We have long supported the goals of *Opening Doors*. However, while ongoing efforts to end homelessness are having an impact on individuals fortunate enough to obtain services, we do not believe that the numbers are in fact declining. HUD's data combines data on the number of people living outdoors (which is counted differently in every city) and the number in HUD funded emergency shelter and transitional housing (which is limited to the capacity of those programs). This number excludes millions of Americans who are without housing and living doubled up or in motels because HUD programs are full."

The Law Center understands all too well the challenges faced by these families, as we work to ensure that the educational rights of homeless children and youth are protected. In October, the U.S. Department of Education released data showing that public schools served a record number of homeless children and youth, over 1.1 million. The 1,168,354 homeless students enrolled by U.S. preschools and K-12 schools in the 2011-2012 school year is the highest number on record, and a 10 percent increase over the previous school year. The number of homeless children in public schools has increased 72 percent since the beginning of the recession, and 80 percent of these children are not counted in the HUD data.

"HUD's efforts to house people living on our streets and in shelters are important, said Foscarinis, "but we must remember the 'hidden homeless' - all the people who are simply not counted, because they are not living on the streets and are unable to access shelters that are full. Budget cuts at HUD and other federal agencies have devastated this group, and the federal government must do more to help these families get back on their feet."

"We know what it takes to prevent and end homelessness," said Law Center Policy Director

Jeremy Rosen; "we call on Congress and the Administration to implement these pragmatic, proven solutions."

- Providing at least \$1 billion in funding for the National Housing Trust Fund.
- Making the Protecting Tenants At Foreclosure Act permanent, so that innocent tenants are not made homeless when their landlords are foreclosed on.
- Fully implementing the Violence Against Women Act, so survivors are not subject to eviction after already having been the victims of crime.
- Providing at least \$150 million for the Department of Education's Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, and better aligning the definitions of homelessness used by HUD and the Department of Education.

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The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty is a leader in the movement to prevent and end homelessness. To achieve its goal, the Law Center uses three main strategies: policy advocacy, public education, and impact litigation.