

S. 220, THE EMERGENCY FAMILY STABILIZATION ACT

The current economic crisis and related family stress threaten to create new waves of family and youth homelessness. Even prior to COVID-19, youth and family homelessness were at record levels: public schools identified over 1.5 million children and youth experiencing homelessness. **Over 80% of these children and youth -- 1,222,718 children and youth - were staying outside the formal shelter system, bouncing between temporary situations with other people or in motels, when they were first identified.** Similarly, most young adults experiencing homelessness are not in shelter or on the streets. These hidden homeless situations are unstable, lead to frequent moves, and put families and youth at great risk of COVID-19 transmission, infection, and illness — as well as predation, violence, and trafficking. Now more than ever, these children, families, and youth need our attention if they are to receive the help they need to survive and thrive.

The Solution:

It is essential that the local agencies to which families and youth are most closely connected - including early childhood programs, schools, and other community agencies - are able to immediately meet the emergency needs of all families and youth experiencing homelessness (especially those who are ineligible or unserved by other systems). By stabilizing children, youth, and families directly, as soon as they are identified, these agencies can prevent more entrenched homelessness, reduce trauma, and combat the spread of the pandemic.

S. 220, the Emergency Family Stabilization Act will:

- Create a new emergency funding stream through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, for local agencies that currently receive ACF grants, or have experience in serving children, families, and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness, as defined by the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Provide \$800 million in direct flexible funding to meet the unique needs of children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness in the wake of the coronavirus.
- Give special consideration to programs serving families and youth who face barriers in accessing homeless services, as well as the needs of pregnant women, pregnant and parenting youth, children under age 6, children with disabilities, families experiencing domestic violence, survivors of sexual assault or human trafficking, and historically marginalized and underserved communities of color.
- Permit funds to be used for a wide range of emergency housing, health, education, and safety-related activities, including but not limited to: purchasing PPE, food, hygiene supplies, mental health services, transportation services, emergency child care, communications and connectivity needs, education, training and employment-related needs, eviction prevention, motel stays, assistance in seeking housing placements, assistance in accessing unemployment and other federal benefits.
- Set aside specific funding for tribes, tribal organizations, Native Hawaiian organizations and ensures funds are distributed to urban, rural, and suburban areas.

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