

**Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights**

Ref.: OL USA 22/2025  
(Please use this reference in your reply)

16 July 2025

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context and Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 52/10 and 53/10.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning **the budget request for the fiscal year (FY) 2026, presented by the Executive on 30 May 2025, as well as other measures being implemented by the Trump administration. The FY26 budget request foresees a 44 percent cut to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programmes, including a 43 percent cut to rental assistance programmes, as well as cuts to homelessness support and other programmes currently providing funding to persons belonging to vulnerable groups. If approved, the budget may lead to cuts to vital affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programmes, and would impose changes to rental and homelessness assistance that risk leaving more families struggling to afford rent, and at increased risk of homelessness. The Congress is expected to approve a final budget for 2026 by 1 October 2025, marking the beginning of the FY26.**

According to the information received:

On 2 May 2025, President Donald J. Trump released a partial request of the fiscal year (FY) 2026. Further details of the full FY were issued on 30 May.<sup>1</sup> The full budget request proposes a historic 44 percent cut to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) department's programmes, including a 43 percent cut to rental assistance programmes. It foresees a 12 percent cut to homelessness assistance programmes, and the elimination of other programmes that provide vital funding and services to communities and low-income families. Members of the Senate and House Appropriations Committee are currently working to reach spending agreements. The House Appropriations Transport, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Subcommittee released the text of their spending on 14 July 2025, with a full Committee markup scheduled for 17 July 2025. The Chair of the House Appropriations Committee has stated that they will draft their FY26 spending bills close to the President's budget request. The Senate's Appropriations Committee are, at the time of writing, discussing topline spending agreements and a timeline for markups. The Congress will have until 1 October 2025, the beginning of FY26, to draft, negotiate and approve the final FY26 spending bills.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/appendix\\_fy2026.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/appendix_fy2026.pdf)

## *Rental assistance*

As of FY25, HUD rental assistance programmes include:

- The Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), also known as Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) programme, providing low-income families, older persons, and people with disabilities with vouchers to help pay rent in privately owned housing of their choice.
- The Public Housing programme, offering federally subsidized rental units owned and managed by local public housing authorities for low-income individuals and families.
- The Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA), supplying rental subsidies tied to specific privately owned housing developments, ensuring long-term affordability for eligible tenants.
- The Housing for the Elderly (section 202), funding the development and operation of affordable housing with supportive services specifically for low-income older persons.
- The Housing for Persons with Disabilities (section 811), providing affordable housing and services to low-income individuals with disabilities, enabling them to live independently in the community.

The Executive's full budget request would reduce funding for HUD rental assistance programmes by USD 26.718 billion from the previous year, an unprecedented 43 percent cut, and redesign HUD rental assistance programmes. Under the proposal, HUD's Tenant-Based Rental Assistance program, Public Housing, Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA), Housing for the Elderly, and Housing for Persons with Disabilities programmes would be combined into one new State Rental Assistance Block Grant (SRABG) program, funded at USD 31.79 billion. The SRABG would also include USD 25 million for Foster Youth to Independence grants for youth aging out of foster care.

The full request provides limited details on the administration of the SRABG program, specifying that the HUD Secretary would be charged with developing a formula to allocate funding to states, and instructing the Secretary to develop a formula for FY26 prioritizing the maintenance of assistance for people with disabilities and older adults who already receive HUD assistance. The request also instructs the HUD Secretary to "establish program requirements to incentivize self-sufficiency...including but not limited to two-year time limits on assistance for households in which neither the elderly nor persons with disabilities reside." There are no additional details provided on how a two-year time limit on receiving rental assistance would be implemented. It is estimated that, at the time of writing, federal rental assistance programmes support roughly 10 million people afford housing, 60 percent of whom are older persons,

children, and persons with disabilities.<sup>2</sup>

### *Homelessness*

The President's FY26 budget request would allocate about USD 4.02 billion for HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants (HAG) program, a decrease of around USD 27 million from FY25, and rebrand it as primarily emergency solution grants programme. Under the programme, the HUD Secretary will allocate amounts directly to states and local governments based on a formula to be developed by the Secretary. The request reframes the HAG program as "an emergency solutions grants (ESG) program," specifying that assistance would be used to "assist homeless individuals or those at-risk of homelessness on an emergency, short-term, or medium-term basis." As in the rental assistance proposal, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness would only be able to receive assistance for up to two years. The request would also allow HAG grantees to create a preference for assisting "elderly individuals or families, or disabled individuals or families."

As of FY25, major long-term homelessness programmes include:

- Continuum of Care (CoC), providing funding to non-profit and government organizations to coordinate and deliver housing and supportive services for people experiencing homelessness across a community-wide system.
- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), combining affordable housing assistance with voluntary support services to help people with disabilities or chronic homelessness maintain stable housing long-term.
- Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP), supporting communities in developing and implementing comprehensive plans to prevent and end youth homelessness through targeted services and housing for unaccompanied youth aged 16 to 24.
- National Homeless Data Analysis Project (NHDAP), funding activities associated with preparing the Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress and reporting on system-level performance.

The proposal does not foresee any additional funding for long-term homelessness programmes such as the Continuum of Care (CoC), the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Program, the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP), or the National Homeless Data Analysis Project (NHDAP). It is estimated that the elimination of CoC and PSH may threaten access to housing for 218,000 formerly homeless individuals currently in permanent supportive programmes.<sup>3</sup> The total number of persons whose access to adequate housing may be threatened across all CoC-funded programmes, including PSH, Rapid Re-Housing (RRH), Single Room Occupancy units (SROs), and Bridge

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<sup>2</sup> [Federal Rental Assistance Fact Sheets | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#)

<sup>3</sup> <https://endhomelessness.org/resources/research-and-analysis/visualizing-the-impacts-of-the-presidents-fy2026-budget-returns-to-homelessness-and-major-setbacks-could-be-ahead/>

Housing (transitional housing designed to later connect residents with RRH programmes), is likely to be much higher.

In addition, the President's FY26 budget request would not provide additional funding for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program, previously funded at USD 505 million in FY25. The budget request argues that "individuals living with HIV/AIDS who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness may be served through the expanded emergency solutions grant (ESG) programme." Over 100,000 households receive HOPWA housing assistance and/or supportive services annually.<sup>4</sup>

Taking into consideration cuts to both HOPWA and HAG funding, the budget request would lead to a USD 532 million decrease in homelessness assistance, or 12 percent from the previous fiscal year. Even before these proposed cuts, homeless service providers were only able to provide permanent housing to 16 percent of people served in their shelters.<sup>5</sup>

### *Housing for Indigenous Peoples*

The President's FY26 budget request would cut funding for HUD's Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) program to USD 872 million, a roughly 24 percent cut from the over USD 1.1 billion allocated for the program in FY25. It would provide USD 10 million, to "remain available until expended," for non-competitive grants to continue assisting Indigenous Peoples veterans currently being served by HUD's Tribal Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (Tribal HUD-VASH) program. The proposal would also not foresee additional funding for HUD's Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant program (NHHBG), providing funds to carry out affordable housing activities, including rental assistance, both on and off the Hawaiian territory for low-income Indigenous Peoples Hawaiian households.

### *Fair Housing*

In 2025, fair housing programmes included:

- Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP), providing annual non-competitive funding to state and local civil rights agencies that enforce fair housing laws, supporting complaint processing, investigations, training, data systems, outreach, and technical assistance.
- Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP), offering competitive grants to non-profit fair housing organizations to conduct testing, enforcement, public education, and outreach on fair housing rights.
- National Fair Housing Training Academy (NFHTA), providing training on fair housing topics for FHIP and FHAP staff.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://archives.hud.gov/news/2023/pr23-045.cfm>

<sup>5</sup> <https://endhomelessness.org/resources/research-and-analysis/visualizing-the-impacts-of-the-presidents-fy2026-budget-returns-to-homelessness-and-major-setbacks-could-be-ahead/>

- Limited English Proficiency Initiative (LEPI), funding interpretation and translation of HUD program materials and services for persons with limited English proficiency.

The President's budget request would allocate USD 26 million for HUD's Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP), while also zeroing out funding for the Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP). The budget does not include funding for the National Fair Housing Training Academy (NFHTA), and the Limited English Proficiency Initiative (LEPI). Fair Housing programmes were previously funded at USD 86 million in FY25.

### *Broader context*

The cuts in housing programmes are being proposed while the United States of America grapple with a severe housing affordability and availability crisis, and increased homelessness rates.

In March 2025 the U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimated a severe shortage of 4.5 million homes which has created cascading economic challenges, from skyrocketing housing prices to reduced workforce mobility.<sup>6</sup> According to the United States Census Bureau nearly half of all renter households were cost-burdened in 2023, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs, and Black or African American renters are more likely affected.<sup>7</sup> Households headed by older persons or persons with disabilities are disproportionately at risk to be severely cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing costs. In 2024, an estimated 771,480 people experienced homelessness on a single night,<sup>8</sup> representing an 18 percent increase from the previous year and the highest ever recorded.

In January 2025, the federal government temporarily paused all grants, while evaluating whether the programmes met the "the President's policies and requirements" standards, which implies denying funding to, in particular, financial assistance for foreign aid, non-governmental organizations, DEI, woke gender ideology, and the green new deal", according to a memo issued by the Office of Management and Budget. The administration added new provisions to grant agreements with homeless service providers, requiring them to reject gender-inclusive and other diversity, equity, and inclusion programmes and implement anti-immigrant provisions. The new Secretary of the HUD further indicated that incentives for evidence-based Housing First approaches will not be enforced.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Chamber of Commerce, The State of Housing in America, 17 March 2025, available at: <https://www.uschamber.com/economy/the-state-of-housing-in-america>.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Nearly Half of Renter Households Are Cost-Burdened, Proportions differ by Race, 12 September 2024, available at: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2024/renter-households-cost-burdened-race.html>.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department, The 2024 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress, Part 1: Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2024-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> @SecretaryTurner, X, 13 March 2025, 2:47 PM, <https://x.com/SecretaryTurner/status/1900257331184570703>.

On 14 March 2025, an Executive Order targeted several federal agencies, including the Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) fund. The Executive Order called for the elimination of all “non statutory components and functions” of these agencies and aimed to “reduce the performance of their statutory functions and associated personnel to the minimum presence and function required by law”. The USICH is an independent federal agency tasked with coordinating the federal response to homelessness between departments and agencies, and is authorized by Congress. It coordinates long-term strategies to prevent and reduce homelessness, facilitating access to stable housing and connecting persons living in homelessness with healthcare, employment, and education services. The CDFI fund helps generate economic development in underserved, under-invested communities, including by providing access to financial products and services for community members and local businesses. On 15 April 2025, the USICH was effectively shut down with all its staff put on administrative leave. The budget proposal allocates USD 250,000 for the effective close out of USICH. On 28 March 2025, the administration also issued an Executive Order titled ‘Making the District of Columbia safe and beautiful’, among other things ‘requiring prompt removal and cleanup of all homeless or vagrant encampments (...) to the maximum extent permitted by law’, (sect. 4 c)), without providing for new housing or shelter resources.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of the information received, we would like to express our serious concerns that the proposed cuts to HUD’s vital affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programmes, and changes to rental and homelessness assistance, may exacerbate housing instability and leave more individuals and families struggling to afford rent, and at increased risk of homelessness.

We wish to recall that by ratifying the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) on 21 October 1994 the United States of America have committed to guarantee that the right to adequate housing shall be enjoyed by everyone without discrimination (article 5(e)iii). Moreover article 11.1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), signed by the United States of America on 5 October 1972, recognizes “the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. [...]” This entails guaranteeing security of tenure, including protection against forced eviction, and availability of services, materials and infrastructure, which should be affordable, habitable, accessible, well located, and culturally adequate. While the United States of America have not ratified ICESCR, as a signatory they must refrain in good faith from acting in a way that violates the Covenant’s objectives (Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 1155 UNTS 331 (1961), art. 18).

Housing remains essential, moreover, to protect many other human rights that the United States of America have either expressly recognized in their constitutional order or are bound by under international human rights treaties they have ratified.

While the realization of the right to housing must take into account the financial resources of State parties, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

(CESCR) has noted that “any deliberately retrogressive measures [which would impact the realization of the rights of the pact] would require the most careful consideration and would need to be fully justified by reference to the totality of the rights provided for in the Covenant and in the context of the full use of the maximum available resources” (general comment No. 3, para. 9). In our view, there is no compelling justification to explain these budget cuts and other above-mentioned measures, especially not in the context of rising homelessness and a widespread and deepening housing affordability crisis. These actions should therefore be seen as deliberately retrogressive measures.

In its general comment No. 4, the CESCR has further clarified that “steps should be taken by States parties to ensure that the percentage of housing-related costs is, in general, commensurate with income levels. States parties should establish housing subsidies for those unable to obtain affordable housing, as well as forms and levels of housing finance which adequately reflect housing needs” (para. 8(c)). The Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing detailed the obligation of States to ensure that everyone has access to not only adequate, but also affordable housing (A/78/192).

Moreover, we are concerned that the proposed cuts and measures would disproportionately harm persons belonging to vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, older persons, children, migrants, LGBT persons, Indigenous Peoples, persons living with HIV/AIDS, as well as low-income households and tenants facing eviction. This may violate article 2(2) of the ICESCR, obliging States to guarantee the rights “without discrimination of any kind,” including on the basis of disability, age, health status, ethnicity, or economic condition, as well as the requirement to ‘give due priority to social groups living in disadvantaged conditions and pay special attention to them’, as per general comment No. 4 CESCR (see also A/77/175).

We are concerned that the proposal to impose two-year time limits on rental assistance for able bodied, non-elderly households, under the new SRABG may violate the requirement to ensure security of tenure, as established in general comment No. 4 of the CESCR. This may undermine housing stability, and risks leading to forced evictions. We would like to underline that, as established by the CESCR in its general comment No. 7, forced evictions are *prima facie* incompatible with the requirements of the Covenant. If an eviction is to take place, procedural safeguards are essential, including genuine consultation, adequate and reasonable notice, adequate alternative housing made available within a reasonable time, and the provision of legal remedies and legal assistance. Evictions should not result in individuals being rendered homeless or vulnerable to the violation of other human rights. Where those affected are unable to provide for themselves, the State party must take all appropriate measures, to the maximum of its available resources, to ensure that adequate alternative housing is available. Moreover, the lack of detailed implementation guidance raises serious concerns about due process, accountability and remedies for the individuals and households that may lose assistance.

We are alarmed by the decision to suspend the activities of the Interagency Council on Homelessness, which implemented long-term strategies to reduce and end homelessness by coordinating with state and local authorities, as well as the private sector. In our view, this may have a dramatic impact on persons currently experiencing homelessness and may lead to a further increase in homelessness rates in the United

States of America. Additionally, the proposed redirection of Homeless Assistance Grants (HAG) to capped, emergency-only aid, shutting down major long-term support systems (CoC, PSH, YHDP) may severely impact States' ability to address repeated homelessness and ensure long-term solutions. While we note that offering temporary housing solutions is not against human rights law as it is preferable to providing no accommodation at all, such offers remain insufficient to fulfil the right to adequate housing and other human rights obligations under international human rights law. States remain under the obligation to end such a non-rights compliant solution as soon as possible and ensure that the concerned individuals or households have access to long-term housing that complies fully with the right to adequate housing and other rights.

Finally, we are concerned that the requested cuts to fair housing programmes may lead to a substantial reduction of housing discrimination complaints being investigated, as most of these investigations are handled by organizations funded under the FHAP and FHIP. Without adequate funding, agencies may lack the resources to investigate complaints, prosecute violators, or conduct outreach and education, and victims of discrimination, including based on race, gender, or migration status, may be left without recourse. We are worried that this may lead to impunity for discriminatory housing practices, and in turn to further discrimination and segregation, reinforcing long-standing inequalities.

To conclude, the proposed cuts and changes in rental and homelessness assistance risk leading to more housing instability and homelessness. The budget cuts risk pushing vulnerable people who currently receive vital assistance out of existing support programmes. We are also concerned that these budget cuts would rather aggravate the housing affordability crisis than solving it.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned observations.
2. Please indicate whether your Excellency's Government has conducted an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed budget cuts on persons belonging to vulnerable groups, including persons experiencing homelessness, and migrants. If such an assessment exists, please provide disaggregated data on the persons who might be impacted by the budget cuts.
3. Please provide information on the reasons behind the decision to suspend the activities of the Interagency Council on Homelessness. Following the suspension of this mechanism, please indicate what measures your Excellency's Government plans to take to fill the gap left by this decision.
4. Please provide information on the measures, if any, that your Excellency's Government plans to implement to guarantee, considering the cuts proposed by the budgetary law, that persons currently receiving federal

support to access adequate housing do not lose access to such support.

5. Please provide further details on how your Excellency's Government plans to administer the new SRABG and emergency solution grants programme for homelessness, including to ensure that persons and households receiving support do not lose it as a result of the two-year time limit.

This communication, as a comment on pending or recently adopted legislation, regulations or policies, and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) after 48 hours. They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

We therefore urge the United States of America to reconsider the proposed FY26 budget with the view to prevent disproportionate cuts to housing programmes that risk impacting disproportionately the most marginalized groups and individuals. Any budgetary changes should prioritize the protection of the most disadvantaged and marginalized populations, in line with the United States of America's obligations under international human rights law. We also call on the United States of America to reconsider taking any other measures that risk aggravating homelessness and compounding the barriers and vulnerabilities of persons experiencing homelessness and extreme poverty, including the suspension of the activities of the Interagency Council on Homelessness. Efforts and resources should be concentrated on addressing root causes and providing access to adequate and long-term housing rather than closing down or reducing funding of various housing programmes.

We encourage the United States of America to, instead of cutting budgetary provisions, to rather significantly expand federal investments to prevent and overcome homelessness and housing instability by stepping up preventive and responsive measures and making homes affordable for low-income individuals and households. Access to adequate housing should be guaranteed to all persons present on the United States of America's territory without discrimination, regardless of race, migration status, sexual orientation or gender identity.

We would kindly request that your Excellency's Government promptly transmit this communication also to members of the Congress.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Balakrishnan Rajagopal  
Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context

Olivier De Schutter  
Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights