

Federal Legislation Update

BUDGET & FUNDING-RELATED ITEMS - Updates

➔ **Debt ceiling & Proposed Federal Budget Cuts – No New Update** – Congress passed and President Joe Biden signed into law the “Fiscal Responsibility Act,” an agreement to lift the federal debt ceiling until 2025 in exchange for capping federal spending programs at FY 23 levels in FY 24 and allowing an only 1% increase in spending in FY25. The bill also rescinds unspent COVID-19 relief funds, imposes more work requirements on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients, and reallocates funding previously provided to help the IRS audit higher-income households for other purposes. Because some HUD programs require additional funding annually, the debt ceiling agreement acts as a cut to affordable housing and homelessness assistance. In FY 24 alone, HUD needs an estimated \$13 billion to \$16 billion in additional funding just to maintain current levels of assistance.

➔ **Senate FY 24 THUD Bill – New** – On 7/20 the Senate T-HUD Appropriations Committee released its FY 24 spending bill. Overall, the bill provides \$70.06 billion for HUD’s affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs, an increase of \$8.26 billion (or slightly more than 13%) over FY23-enacted levels. However, HUD needs to increase funding by approximately \$13 billion just to maintain existing levels of assistance. Though, the Senate draft proposes \$1.86 billion more in funding for HUD’s vital affordable housing and homelessness programs than the draft spending bill released by the U.S. House of Representatives on 7/11. The Senate THUD bill provides increased funding for key HUD programs, particularly those vital to getting or keeping people with the lowest incomes housed. The bill proposes:

- \$31.7 billion for the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program (\$1.48 billion more than FY 23).
 - Expected to be sufficient to renew existing contracts and provides funding for an additional 4,000 vouchers targeted to Veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness and youth aging out of foster care – including \$30 million for VASH (\$20 million decrease from FY 23) and \$30 million for the Family Unification Program (FUP)
- \$15.7 billion for Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) program (\$884 million more than FY 23).
- \$686 for Section 811 Mainstream vouchers (\$78 million increase from FY 23).
- \$3.9 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants (HAG) program (\$275 million increase from FY 23). Within this is:
 - \$100 million for the construction, preservation, and operation of permanent supportive housing, and \$31 million for capacity-building grants and technical assistance.
 - Language that would allow HUD to complete funds every other year, cut down on time and resources spent on paperwork, and allow service providers to focus on delivering assistance (aka 2-year NOFOs).
- \$1.5 billion for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) and the recently authorized Grants to Identify and Remove Barriers to Affordable Housing program.
- \$1.5 billion for the HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) (same as FY 23).
- \$4.5 billion for CDBG (decrease of \$1.9 billion from FY 23). Of that amount, \$3.3 billion is allocated for formula funding, while approximately \$1.06 billion is earmarked for specific community development projects. The Senate proposal would also provide \$100 million in funding for grants to identify and remove barriers to affordable housing – a \$15 million increase from FY23. The program is zeroed out in the House draft.
- Level funding for Section 202 Housing for the Elderly, Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities, Housing Counseling Assistance, and fair housing programs.

➔ **House FY 24 Appropriation Bills (including THUD) – Update** – On 7/27, the House Committee on Appropriations approved all 12 of its FY 24 appropriations bills, including the FY24 THUD spending bill. The bill proposes funding HUD at \$68.2 billion, a \$6.4 billion (or roughly 10%) increase to HUD programs over previously enacted levels. HUD needs an approximately \$13 billion increase in funding over current levels just to maintain existing assistance. The spending bill proposes deep cuts to or even elimination of some HUD programs but appears to adequately fund most rental assistance programs. The bill would:

- Fund Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) and Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) programs at levels that may be sufficient to renew existing contracts.
- Provide a slight increase for HUD’s Homeless Assistance Grants (HAG) program.

Other HUD programs would face funding cuts, including:

- The Public Housing Capital Fund, Public Housing Operating Fund, Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities, and Section 202 Housing for the Elderly.
- The HOME Investments Partnership Program would be cut by more than half.
- Funding for several other programs – including the Family Unification Program, Incremental Vouchers, Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, and Housing Mobility Services – would be zeroed out completely.

House Republican’s FY 24 Agriculture Appropriations bill – No New Update – on 5/17 House Republicans released their FY 24 agriculture appropriations bill which proposes policy changes and funding cuts to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), that would result in benefit cuts or loss of eligibility for millions of people. To adhere to the funding caps on annual appropriations proposed under House Republicans’ debt-ceiling-and-cuts bill, the proposal would cut WIC benefits for 5 million pregnant and postpartum participants and young

children under 5. The bill also proposes including an expansion of SNAP's existing work-reporting requirement to include older adults aged 50 to 55. These changes would put approximately 1 million older adults at risk of losing their SNAP benefits.

BILLS – Updates

S 1557/ HR 3238 The Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act – No New Update – Senator Angus King cosponsored bipartisan legislation to create nearly two million new affordable homes across the country – including thousands in Maine. The Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act would expand the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) to provide more homes for low-income people, support small businesses trying to attract workers, and fill the state's gap of more than 20,000 affordable housing units. The bill would:

- Increase the number of credits available to states by 50 percent for the next two years and make the temporary 12.5 percent increase secured in 2018 permanent—which has already helped build more than 59,000 additional affordable housing units nationwide.
- Stabilize financing for workforce housing projects built using private activity bonds by decreasing the amount of private activity bonds needed to secure Housing Credit funding. As a result, projects would have to carry less debt, and more projects would be eligible to receive funding.

S 1436, CHARGE Act of 2023 – No New Update – Introduced on 5/3 by Senator Jon Tester, this bill would permanently authorize additional services for Veterans experiencing homelessness that were authorized at the beginning of the pandemic. These services include: Basic essentials like food, shelter, clothing, blankets, and hygiene items; Transportation to appointments with service providers and conducting housing searches; and ways to stay in touch with providers and landlords, such as tablets, smartphones, and data plans.

HR 645, the Healthy Foundations for Homeless Veterans Act, introduced in the House would authorize these additional services for an additional two years.

S 1257, Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act – No new update – This bill was reintroduced in the Senate on 4/25 by Senators Van Hollen and Young. This bipartisan bill would create 250,000 new housing vouchers, paired with mobility-related services, to help low-income families with young children move to communities of their choice, including neighborhoods with high-performing schools and high-quality childcare and early education programs.

S 24 / HR 516 Fighting Homelessness Through Services and Housing Act – No New Update – Introduced by Senator Feinstein in the Senate and Congressman Lieu in the House, this bill would authorize a grant program within the Health Resources and Services Administration for housing programs that offer comprehensive services and intensive case management for homeless individuals and families. The program would include five-year implementation grants to assist such entities in carrying out activities and paying capital building costs associated with the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families.

S 680 DASH Act – No New Update – Reintroduced by Senator Wyden on 3/7, the [DASH Act](#) would make a generational investment to house all people experiencing homelessness, tackle the housing affordability crisis, and expand homeownership opportunities for young people by creating a new down payment tax credit for first-time homebuyers. The DASH Act would make stable, safe and decent housing available for all by:

- Housing everyone experiencing homelessness within five years, and prioritizing children and families for placement, by issuing them a Housing Choice Voucher, because young children are heavily impacted by housing instability, and because housing is a chief determinant of health;
- Expanding health, child care, financial and nutrition services for families and individuals to stay on a path to unassisted housing stability, because the climb out of housing poverty is nearly impossible to complete alone;
- Greatly increasing the production of deeply affordable housing for families exiting homelessness and for low-income households by investing in effective, efficient existing programs and reforming the tax code to strengthen the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) to weather the economic fallout from the pandemic, as well as establish a Renter's Tax Credit and Middle-Income Housing Tax Credit (MIHTC);
- Investing in homeownership in underserved communities and for low income Americans with new tax credits and down payment assistance, including a down payment tax credit for first-time homebuyers; and
- Incentivizing environmentally-friendly development strategies and land use policies.
- Permanent authorization of appropriations for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act grants.

HR 1708 Housing is a Human Right Act of 2023 – No New Update – On 3/22 Rep. Pramila Jayapal introduced the Housing is a Human Right Act of 2023, which would address root causes of homelessness, meet the needs of community members experiencing harms from homelessness, transition communities towards providing housing for all, end penalization of homelessness, and ensure full democratic participation and inclusion of persons experiencing homelessness, and for other purposes.

HR 773 Homelessness and Behavioral Health Care Coordination Act– No New Update – On 2/2 Rep. Madeleine Dean reintroduced HR 773, the Homelessness and Behavioral Health Care Coordination Act, co-sponsored by Rep. Sylvia Garcia. This bill would help people experiencing homelessness and behavioral health issues, including substance use disorder, access critical supportive services by authorizing a grant program within HUD to help state and local governments, tribal entities, public housing agencies, and Continuums of Care better coordinate services for behavioral health, including substance use disorder and homelessness.

S 255 Asylum Seekers Work Authorization Act of 2023 – No New Update – On 2/3 Senators Collins and Sinema reintroduced the Asylum Seekers Work Authorization Act of 2023, which would make asylum seekers eligible to receive work authorizations starting 30 days after filing an asylum application. Senator King is an original co-sponsor. On 3/1, Congresswoman Chellie Pingree reintroduced the Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act in the House.

HR 9587 Tenants’ Right to organize Act – No new update – On 12/19 Rep. Andy Levin introduced the Tenant’s Right to Organize Act. Per NLIHC, the bill would “protect the organizing rights of tenants with Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) and tenants living in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties. Currently, only public housing tenants have a legally recognized right to organize. In extending the right to organize to HCV and LIHTC tenants, the bill recognizes that all tenants have the right to decent, safe, stable, and sanitary housing.”

RULES/Other Federal Items of Note – No Update

State Update: Please see the Bill Tracking document for the State legislature Update.