

# References

## Glossary

### **Affordable housing**

Housing is considered affordable when a household spends no more than 30% of its income on housing-related costs, such as rent and utilities.

### **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)**

On February 13, 2009, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in response to the Great Recession. This legislation aimed to create jobs, increase economic activity, invest in long-term economic growth, and demonstrate accountability and transparency in government spending. To achieve these goals, ARRA appropriated funds for tax cuts; entitlement programs; education; health care; and federal contracts, grants, and loans. The act also included \$1.5 billion for homeless and at-risk households through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program.

### **Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR)**

The Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR) is a yearly report by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development about homelessness in the United States. The report describes year-to-year trends in homelessness as observed from point-in-time count and Homeless Management Information System data. The AHAR includes information on demographics, available services, subgroup censuses, duration of homelessness, and housing situations prior to homelessness.

### **Area Median Income (AMI)**

Area Median Income is the median income within a particular metropolitan or nonmetropolitan area, adjusted for household size.

### **Block grant program**

Block grants are federal monies allocated by formula to state and local governments. Block grants give recipients broad flexibility to design and implement designated programs because federal oversight and requirements are limited, but funding levels are unresponsive to increased need during economic down-

turns. Examples of block grants include: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Community Development Block Grant, Social Services Block Grant, and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

### **Centralized or coordinated assessment system**

A centralized or coordinated assessment system uses a standardized tool to evaluate the needs of all homeless households in the same way prior to receiving homelessness services. Assistance is then tailored according to an individual family's level of need and barriers to self-sufficiency.

### **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act**

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act is federal legislation that authorizes the Child Care and Development Fund, which provides child care subsidies for low-income families.

### **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)**

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is the primary source of child care subsidies for low-income families. CCDF is a block grant administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

### **Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)**

Created in 1997, the Children's Health Insurance Program provides federal matching funds for state health insurance programs serving uninsured children and pregnant women in families who do not qualify for Medicaid but are unable to afford private insurance.

### **Chronic homelessness**

Chronically homeless individuals are persons with disabling conditions who have been homeless for one or more years, or who have had four or more episodes of homelessness in the past three years. During these episodes, a chronically homeless person has resided in emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation; transitional housing and permanent supportive housing clients are not considered chronically homeless.

As of January 2012, a family may be considered chronically homeless, pursuant to the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009, if the adult head of household fits the definition of a chronically homeless person.

### **Continuum of Care (CoC)**

A Continuum of Care (CoC) is a coordinated, comprehensive, and strategic organizational structure representing an area of a state and mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to receive homeless assistance funding. A CoC may represent an area as small as a city and as large as an entire state. For the most part, CoCs are organized at the regional or local level, with the remaining jurisdictions within a state belonging to the Balance of State CoC. Within the CoC, community service providers, public housing authorities, nonprofit organizations, and local and state governments form a consortium to address local homelessness and housing issues. The CoC submits an application for funds available under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Before the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, these included Supportive Housing Program and Shelter Plus Care grants. With the passage of the HEARTH Act, these include Continuum of Care Program and Emergency Solutions Grant Program funds.

### **Continuum of Care Program**

The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act consolidated the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Supportive Housing Program, Shelter Plus Care, and Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Program for Single-room Occupancy Dwellings for Homeless Individuals into the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program. The CoC Program funds permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, transitional housing, supportive services, and Homeless Management Information Systems. The program also formalizes the preexisting CoC funding application and service coordination process and requires increased collaboration between Emergency Solutions Grant recipients and CoCs.

### **Cost burden**

A household is cost-burdened when it pays more than 30% of its income on housing-related expenses. A household is severely cost-burdened when it spends more than 50% of its income on housing-related costs.

### **Diversions**

Diversions programs find housing alternatives for families as they are entering shelter. These programs either resolve the problems that forced families out of their former residences (for example, through landlord mediation) or find new housing for families.

### **Doubled up**

Doubled-up households share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.

### **Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (EHCY)**

Authorized under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (EHCY) ensures that homeless students have equal access to free and appropriate public education. According to EHCY, homeless children must be enrolled immediately, have the right to remain in and receive transportation to their

schools of origin, and receive supports to succeed academically. Each state provides activities and services for homeless children, including tutoring, summer enrichment programs, and school supplies, to increase enrollment, attendance, and achievement in school. State education agencies (SEAs) facilitate coordination between schools and other organizations, increasing their knowledge of and ability to address issues that homeless children face. SEAs also remove policy barriers to homeless children's school attendance and success and allocate competitive subgrants to local educational agencies. At the local level, each school district must appoint a liaison responsible for the identification of homeless children, coordination and collaboration activities, local adherence to EHCY policies, and the delivery of EHCY services.

### **Emergency shelter**

Emergency shelter programs are temporary residential programs where clients temporarily stay in order to avoid unsheltered homelessness and solve immediate crises.

### **Emergency Shelter Grants Program (ESG)**

Superseded by the Emergency Solutions Grant Program, the Emergency Shelter Grants Program (ESG) was a formula-based federal block grant program allocated to metropolitan areas, urban counties, and states. ESG could be used to fund the operational cost of a shelter facility, the remodeling or rehabilitation of a building used as a shelter, services that address the issues that underlie homelessness, street outreach, prevention, and grant administration. ESG was administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Grantees had to match ESG dollars with local revenue.

### **Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG)**

The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act replaced the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Emergency Shelter Grants Program with the Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG). In addition to funding shelter, street outreach, and grant administration, the new ESG added rapid re-housing as an eligible activity and extended the maximum period for prevention assistance to 24 months.

### **Entitlement program**

Entitlement programs are federal grants allocated based on the number of beneficiaries meeting predetermined eligibility criteria. Entitlement programs have narrowly defined allowable usages but are responsive to increased need during economic downturns. Entitlement programs include: Medicaid, Medicare, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and unemployment insurance benefits.

### **Fair Market Rent (FMR)**

The Fair Market Rent (FMR) in an area is the 40th percentile rent, or the amount below which 40% of market-rent, standard-quality rental units cost. FMR standards are used to determine rent payments for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program.

### **Federal minimum wage**

Established by the Fair Labor Standards Act, the federal minimum wage represents the minimum hourly rate (currently set at \$7.25) at which employers must pay employees.

**Federal Poverty Level (FPL)**

The federal poverty guidelines are a simple measure of the federal poverty threshold used for administrative purposes. The poverty line (level) was originally calculated by multiplying the U.S. Department of Agriculture's economic food plan by a factor of three. The poverty line is now calculated according to the 1963 food plan, adjusted for inflation with the Consumer Price Index. The guidelines are updated annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and are adjusted for household size. For statistical purposes, the U.S. Census Bureau uses different poverty thresholds.

**Food insecurity**

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, food insecurity describes the condition of having limited or uncertain access to nutritionally adequate, safe foods or the inability to access adequate foods in socially acceptable ways (e.g., without scavenging or stealing).

**Foreclosure**

Foreclosure is a legal process initiated by the lender of a mortgage to a borrower who is unable to make payments or does not comply with other terms of the mortgage. The lender is due the remaining balance of the loan and may sell or repossess the home. The majority of foreclosures do not result in the loss of the borrower's home.

**Framework to End Youth Homelessness**

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness released the *Framework to End Youth Homelessness* in 2013 to provide a plan for ultimately preventing and ending youth homelessness. The framework proposes short-, medium-, and long-term strategies for improved data collection and capacity building at the federal, state, and local levels.

**Great Recession**

The term "Great Recession" refers to the period between December 2007 and June 2009, during which the U.S. experienced depressed economic conditions.

**Head Start**

Head Start is a high-quality early childhood development program that serves low-income children from birth to age five and their families. Under the Head Start Act of 2007, income-eligible families are connected to social services related to education, health care, nutrition, parenting, and other areas. Head Start is primarily comprised of two components: Early Head Start, for children zero to three years of age and pregnant women, and Head Start, for children ages three to five. Head Start is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families.

**Health Care for the Homeless (HCH)**

Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) facilitates the operation of health clinics in shelters and soup kitchens. At these sites, health and social workers provide comprehensive medical care to homeless persons and link participants to services related to safe shelter, permanent housing, jobs, family relationships, and substance abuse. HCH grantees include nonprofit organizations, community health centers, local health departments, homeless shelters, and homeless coalitions. HCH is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration.

**Homeless****U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development definition**

Homeless persons are those who live unsheltered or in places not meant for human habitation (e.g., abandoned buildings, vehicles, parks, etc.); live in publicly or privately operated emergency shelters, transitional housing facilities, or the like, or in hotels or motels paid for by charitable or government entities; are exiting institutions after stays of 90 days or less and lived unsheltered or in homeless shelters prior to entry; are fleeing domestic violence; will imminently lose their primary nighttime residences; or are unaccompanied youth under age 25 or members of families with children or unaccompanied youth and qualify as homeless due to other legislation.

**Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act definition**

Homeless individuals are those who lack fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residences, including persons who share others' homes due to loss of housing or economic hardship; live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations; reside in emergency or transitional shelters; live in abandoned hospitals; are awaiting foster care placement; or reside in public or private places not designed for or used as regular sleeping accommodations. The *Almanac* uses the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness.

**Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009**

The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009 is the most recent reauthorization of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Most notably, the HEARTH Act expanded the definitions of homelessness and chronic homelessness used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; replaced the Emergency Shelter Grants Program with the Emergency Solutions Grant Program to add rapid re-housing as an eligible activity and extend prevention assistance; and consolidated the Supportive Housing Program, Shelter Plus Care, and Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Program for Single-room Occupancy Dwellings for Homeless Individuals into the Continuum of Care Program.

**Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS)**

Homeless Management Information Systems collect client-level data on client characteristics, the extent and nature of service use, and outcomes for all families accessing emergency shelter or transitional housing over the course of one year.

**Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP)**

As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program funded programming that provided short- and medium-term financial assistance and housing stabilization to individuals and families who were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Designed to serve individuals and families who would have been homeless without this assistance, this \$1.5 billion initiative gave recipients assistance for up to 18 months and was administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Housing first**

The housing first strategy for ending homelessness provides homeless persons with immediate, permanent housing, followed by supportive services as needed.

**Housing trust fund**

Housing trust funds are state and local revenue bases used to develop, construct, and/or rehabilitate affordable housing for low- to moderate-income households. Localities finance trust funds through a variety of methods, including real estate taxes, taxes on select goods, interest on escrow accounts, and income tax write-offs.

**Housing wage**

The housing wage is how much a full-time worker must earn to afford a two-bedroom home at Fair Market Rent while paying no more than 30% of income towards rent. The housing wage will vary widely across communities due to differences in rents.

**Income****Low-income**

Low-income households have income below 80% of area median income (AMI).

**Very low-income**

Very low-income households have income below 50% of AMI.

**Extremely low-income**

Extremely low-income households have income below 30% of AMI.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

First enacted in 1990 and most recently reauthorized in 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is federal legislation designed to protect the rights of children and youth with disabilities, ensuring that they have equal access to free appropriate public education. Administered at the federal level by the U.S. Department of Education, IDEA sets guidelines for and directs funding toward states and public agencies providing special education services. Part B of IDEA addresses services for children and youth ages three to 21 and Part C addresses early intervention for infants and toddlers ages two and under.

**Liaison, homeless school**

Under the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (EHCY), authorized by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, each school district must appoint a liaison responsible for the identification of homeless children, coordination and collaboration, local adherence to EHCY policies, and the delivery of EHCY services.

**Living wage**

The wage required to be able to meet a family's basic needs and maintain minimum standards of living. The living wage is often compared to the minimum wage to highlight the inadequacy of the minimum wage rate.

**Local education agency (LEA)**

A local education agency is a legally constituted public authority in charge of administering free public elementary and/or secondary education to members of the community.

**Mainstream benefit**

A mainstream benefit is a government assistance program that may assist homeless persons but does not exclusively serve this population. Eligibility for mainstream benefits is determined by disability and/or income status. Common mainstream benefits include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Income, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid, and veterans' benefits.

**McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 established 15 programs assisting homeless persons, including the Supportive Housing Program, Shelter Plus Care, Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Program for Single-room Occupancy Dwellings for Homeless Individuals, Emergency Food and Shelter Program, Education for Homeless Children and Youth, and the Emergency Shelter Grants Program. The act also defined homelessness, created the federal Interagency Council on Homelessness within the executive branch, and altered the Food Stamp Program (now Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) to be more accessible to homeless persons. The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009 is the most recent reauthorization of the legislation. Among other things, the HEARTH Act updates the definition of homelessness, consolidates old programs, and adds eligible activities.

**McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act reauthorized the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (EHCY) through the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001. The Act added provisions to EHCY to further safeguard the educational rights of homeless children, such as the requirement that student transportation be provided to and from the school of origin, the appointment of local education agency (LEA) liaisons with specific duties, a prohibition against the segregation of homeless students into separate schools or classrooms, the requirement that states provide technical assistance to LEAs, and the inclusion of unaccompanied youth as a protected group in addition to children and youth in the physical custody of their parents.

**Medicaid**

Medicaid is a means-tested program providing funding to eligible (primarily low-income) individuals to pay for the costs of medical and health care. While the federal government and states jointly fund Medicaid, states administer the program individually and have the capacity to set different eligibility requirements and regulations. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides oversight at the federal level for the implementation and efficacy of Medicaid programs, particularly in relation to any policy reforms or changes.

**Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness**

Released in June 2010, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* is the guiding document used by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. Crafted under the Obama administration to be consistent with the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act

of 2009, *Opening Doors* marked a shift in strategy from that of the previous administration. While the Bush administration focused on reducing chronic homelessness, *Opening Doors* sets targets for ending homelessness among veterans, families, youth, and children as well as chronically homeless individuals. The plan seeks to achieve these objectives by increasing collaboration, access to affordable housing, employment, and enrollment in mainstream programs; improving health care; advancing housing stability among persons exiting foster care, hospitals, and the criminal justice system; and transforming the homelessness services system to use prevention and rapid re-housing models more frequently.

### **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA)**

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was signed into law in March 2010 to reduce the cost of health care and expand health insurance to all Americans, including low-income individuals who are not enrolled in or were previously ineligible for Medicaid. Starting in January 2014, states were allowed to expand Medicaid coverage to all persons whose earnings are at or below 138% of the federal poverty line.

### **Permanent supportive housing**

Permanent supportive housing is subsidized housing coupled with supportive services for chronically homeless persons or those with disabilities. This housing model is not time-limited. Once in permanent supportive housing, persons are no longer considered homeless and hence not included in censuses of homeless persons.

### **Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA)**

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, also known as welfare reform, was designed to restructure federal welfare entitlement programs to end long-term dependence on government aid. The act replaced multiple funding streams, including Aid to Families with Dependent Children, with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program, placing a time limit on cash assistance and adding work requirements. The act also reduced access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and increased child support enforcement.

### **Point-in-time count**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires that each Continuum of Care (CoC) conduct an annual census of sheltered adults, children, and youth and a biennial census of unsheltered persons to be reported in the CoC application. Some CoCs choose to conduct surveys more frequently. Point-in-time counts present a “snapshot” of a CoC’s homeless population at a given time. This count must be administered one night during the last seven days of January, collect information on chronically homeless persons and other subpopulations, and use statistically acceptable methods.

### **Prevention**

Prevention models target persons who are at risk of homelessness and provide them with cash assistance for rent or utilities or with housing stabilization services such as landlord mediation, connection with mainstream supports, or housing search.

### **Rapid re-housing**

Rapid re-housing models use short- and medium-term housing

subsidies to move families quickly out of emergency shelter with services provided to help families maintain permanent housing.

### **Rent burden**

A household is rent-burdened when it pays more than 30% of its income on housing-related expenses. A household is severely rent-burdened when it spends more than 50% of its income on housing-related costs.

### **Resilience**

Resilience refers to the ability to cope, adapt, and maintain healthy functioning even when facing difficult life circumstances and adversity such as homelessness. Resiliency is influenced by individual, family, and community factors, and can be nurtured and strengthened through targeted interventions.

### **Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA)**

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) authorizes programs to provide shelter and supportive services for homeless youth. Funding under RHYA is allocated to three initiatives. The Basic Center Program (founded in 1974) provides short-term shelter, food, counseling, and referral services to homeless youth aged 18 or younger. The Transitional Living Program (1988) offers longer-term shelter and supportive services to youth aged 16–22. The Street Outreach Program (1994) builds connections between vulnerable street youth up to age 22 and outreach workers to prevent and address exploitation. Although federal funding provided under RHYA cuts off eligibility at age 18 or 22, depending on the program type, it allows monies to be used for older clients when state laws permit.

### **Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV)**

The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program (HCV) is a federally funded, tenant-based program that leases existing apartments in the private market through direct rent subsidy payments to landlords. The program helps very low-income families, disabled persons, and the elderly afford safe and sanitary housing. Public housing authorities (PHAs) administer HCV funding provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. At least 75% of HCV vouchers must serve households whose income does not exceed 30% of area median income (AMI), with the remainder allocated to households whose income does not exceed 80% of AMI. Families contribute 30% of their income toward rent and utilities or up to 40% when affordable housing is not available. PHAs may designate up to 20% of HCV funds for project-based vouchers, which are subsidies tied to specific housing units rather than families.

### **Shelter Plus Care (S+C)**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Shelter Plus Care (S+C) program provided rental subsidies to homeless persons with disabilities (such as mental illness, alcohol and/or drug dependency, or AIDS) and their families, combined with supportive services funded outside the S+C program. S+C funded tenant-based rental assistance, sponsor-based rental assistance, project-based rental assistance, and rehabilitation of and rental assistance for single-room occupancy dwellings. The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act consolidated this program with the Supportive Housing Program and Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Program for Single-room Occupancy Dwellings for Homeless Individuals into the Continuum of Care Program.

**Social safety net**

The social safety net is made up of government-funded, poverty-reduction programs that protect low-income families and individuals in times of economic hardship. These programs are often referred to as mainstream benefit programs and include both entitlement and block grant programs.

**Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)**

The Social Security Disability Insurance program covers benefits for disabled workers (and their family members) who were employed, paid Social Security taxes, and can no longer work due to long-term or fatal medical conditions or disabilities. The program is administered by the U.S. Social Security Administration.

**Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) addresses the health needs of low-income women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or postpartum and children ages zero through four who are nutritionally at risk. The program issues grants to states to help provide supplemental foods, nutrition and breastfeeding counseling, health care referrals, and other health services to WIC participants. The Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture administers the program.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as the Food Stamp Program) is an entitlement program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that provides low-income participants with financial assistance for acquiring food and nutritional education.

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**

The Supplemental Security Income program offers cash assistance to individuals who are 65 years of age or older, blind, or disabled and have minimal income and limited assets. Minors or students under age 22 who are blind or disabled are also eligible. The program is administered by the U.S. Social Security Administration.

**Supportive Housing Program (SHP)**

As part of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the Supportive Housing Program (SHP) was a grant allocated to states, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and governmental entities by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. SHP funds developed housing and supportive services to help homeless persons maintain housing stability, increase skill levels and income, and live independently. Applicants could apply this grant to the acquisition, rehabilitation, construction, leasing, operating, implementation, or administrative costs of the following projects: Transitional Housing, Permanent Housing for Persons with Disabilities, Safe Havens, Homeless Management Information Systems, Innovative Supportive Housing, and Supportive Services Only. The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act consolidated this program, Shelter Plus Care, and Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Program for Single-room Occupancy Dwellings for Homeless Individuals into the Continuum of Care Program.

**Supportive services**

Supportive services are programs and assistance, other than

housing, designed to help clients transition to self-sufficiency. Forms of supportive services include case management, education programming, job training, employment counseling, financial literacy courses, and child care.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is the federal cash welfare grant that replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children in 1996. This block grant program funds work-support services such as child care and transportation and provides time-limited cash assistance to low-income families with dependent children with the expectation that households will participate in approved work activities. The goals of TANF include: assisting low-income families so children can be cared for in their own homes; reducing dependency of low-income parents by promoting job readiness, work, and marriage; preventing pregnancies among unwed mothers; and encouraging the formation and stability of two-parent families.

**Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act**

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides funds to local education agencies (LEAs) and schools that have high numbers of low-income students to ensure that all children meet state academic standards. Homeless students are included in Title I's target population. All schools, regardless of whether they provide Title I services, must reserve funds to provide education-related supportive services for homeless students. These Title I set-asides can fund school uniforms, tutoring at homeless residential programs, and other programs to help homeless students achieve academic success. Each LEA determines the amount available through the Title I set-aside, often based on an assessment of needs or a per-pupil cost evaluation. Title I was last reauthorized through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which added provisions strengthening the language on homeless children's access to Title I funds and requiring states and LEAs receiving funding to coordinate their activities with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

**Toxic stress**

Toxic stress is the excessive or prolonged activation of the body's stress response systems. Caused by factors such as physical or emotional abuse, exposure to violence, or chronic neglect, it can result in disruptions to the development of a child's brain and other organs. The damage caused by toxic stress can negatively affect learning, behavior, and health across a person's lifespan.

**Transitional housing**

A transitional housing program helps residents transition to permanent housing by providing supportive services. Transitional housing programs serve clients for up to two years.

**Unaccompanied youth**

An unaccompanied youth is one who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. The age range used to define this population varies by agency and program.

**Unemployment rate**

The unemployment rate is the percentage of persons in the civilian, noninstitutionalized labor force who do not have jobs, have actively looked for work within the past four weeks, and are available for work.

**U.S. Conference of Mayors**

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is a nonpartisan organization of the 1,393 U.S. cities with populations of 30,000 or more. The organization promotes the development of effective national policy, ensures that federal policy meets urban needs, and creates a forum for sharing ideas and information. Its Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness produces an annual report on homelessness.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service provides children and low-income individuals with access to healthful diets and nutrition education. Its programs include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; National School Lunch Program; School Breakfast Program; Special Milk Program; Summer Food Service Program; Food Assistance for Disaster Relief; the Emergency Food Assistance Program; and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

**U.S. Department of Education (ED)**

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education manages and distributes the Education for Homeless Children and Youth grants for state and local activities, as mandated by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the federal agency responsible for administering essential health and social services, overseeing more than 300 programs, including Medicare, Medicaid, and Head Start, and providing funding for social science research. HHS also informs and solicits feedback from state and local entities on program regulations and policy reforms. The agency encompasses 11 operating divisions, including the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Food and Drug Administration, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. ACF funds state, territory, local, and tribal organizations to provide family assistance (welfare), child support, child care, Head Start, child welfare, and other programs relating to children and families. Actual services are provided by state, county, city, and tribal governments as well as by private local agencies. ACF also provides policy direction and information services. HRSA funds health care providers

across the country to deliver services for uninsured or medically vulnerable populations, train health care professionals, improve access to health care in rural communities, and improve access to high-quality health care in other ways. HRSA administers the Health Care for the Homeless program.

**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is a federal agency that aims to increase homeownership, expand community development, eliminate housing discrimination, and ensure access to affordable housing. Its programs include the Emergency Solutions Grant Program, the Continuum of Care Program, and the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program.

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the federal agency charged with administering benefits and services to veterans and their families, including health benefits, disability compensation, pensions, education benefits, and employment training. VA also leads the Homeless Veterans Initiative, providing counseling and directing funding to programs that target supportive services to veterans experiencing homelessness.

**U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH)**

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), an independent federal agency, coordinates the implementation of *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*. Partnering with 19 federal Cabinet secretaries and other agency heads, USICH is charged with monitoring the effectiveness of federal programs in combating homelessness, facilitating improved collaboration among federal agency programs, and informing and assisting organizations and entities at the state and local levels working in the field of homelessness services. Formerly named the Interagency Council on the Homeless, which the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 established, USICH was most recently reauthorized in 2009 under the auspices of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act.

**U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA)**

The U.S. Social Security Administration administers the Retirement, Disability, and Survivor Insurance programs, including Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance, and determines eligibility for Medicare.