How Federal Funds for HIV Housing Are Now Getting Divided

The new HOPWA formula aims to benefit areas with high rates of HIV. Larger cities may see a drop in their share of funding.

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Congress has revamped a federal program that provides housing assistance for people living with HIV so that areas with the highest rates of the virus will receive more money. According to Kaiser Health News, this means that larger cities like New York and Atlanta will lose a percentage of funding, while, for example, areas in the South—considered the epicenter of today's epidemic—will see their share of funding grow.

In addition to restructuring funding for the Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) program, Congress increased funding for the program by 6 percent. In 2017, HOPWA can award about $320.4 million (not counting about $30 million in competitive grants it may award). Although no cities and jurisdictions will receive less money than in 2016, about 25 cities and counties will see a drop in the proportion of funding allotted to them.

In the past, HOPWA funding was distributed based on an area's cumulative number of cases, including those who died. Now, it is based primarily on the total number of people living with the virus. Previously, to qualify for funding a city had to have 1,500 cumulative AIDS cases. Now, the requirement is 2,000 people living with HIV.

The five cities seeing the biggest drop in their percentage of funding are:

- New York City (-0.73 percent)
- Atlanta (-0.37 percent)
- Miami (-0.19 percent)
- Washington, DC (-0.18 percent)
- Houston (-0.16 percent)

The areas seeing the biggest increases in their share of funding are:

- Los Angeles (0.33 percent)
- Chicago (0.16 percent)
- Texas (0.07 percent)
- Florida (0.07 percent)
- San Diego, California (0.07 percent)

HOPWA stipulates that over the next five years, a grantee cannot lose more than 5 percent or gain more than 10 percent of its share of the previous year.

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