

JIM COSTA

16TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA
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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

June 21, 2013

The Honorable Shaun Donovan
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20410

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Donovan and Secretary Shinseki:

Thank you for your recent announcement that the Fresno Housing Authority (FHA) in partnership with the Fresno U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center will receive \$378,840 for supportive housing assistance through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program.

As you know, this critical funding will allow FHA to offer permanent supportive housing to 70 homeless veterans in the Fresno/Madera Continuum of Care (CoC). Your sincere commitment to ending homelessness among veterans in the Fresno region and across the country is truly appreciated.

It is my understanding that HUD expects to announce more HUD-VASH funding later this summer. I write to respectfully ask that you fully and fairly consider providing HUD-VASH funding for the Merced City and County CoC, where help is desperately needed. The Merced County 2013 Homeless Count and Survey, which was released in May 2013, reported 372 homeless persons and 26 homeless veterans in Merced County. As sobering as these statistics are, these identified individuals are merely the tip of the iceberg. The report went on to say that, "the County of Merced...has a substantial number of households that are at-risk of becoming homeless." The 2012 American Community Survey reported that 23% of Merced County residents were living below the federal poverty level, meaning more than 60,000 Merced County residents are at risk of becoming homeless at any given day. The reality in the San Joaquin Valley is that every day too many of our families are forced to choose between paying their rent or mortgage, food, clothing, medicine, or other daily necessities.

The need for further federal assistance is clear. However, many families are unfortunately seeing the face of the federal government in the Valley recede. Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Defense closed the Atwater Tricare Service Center, a vital lifeline in Merced County for active duty servicemembers, National Guard and Reserve members, and retired servicemembers. Even worse, HUD recently announced the closure of the HUD Field Offices in

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Fresno and Sacramento, leaving the entire Central Valley – the fastest growing region of California with a larger population than more than 30 other states – without a brick and mortar HUD presence.

Our communities need a strong federal partner to help stem the tide of homelessness in the Valley, and that is why I have consistently supported robust federal funding for HUD and the VA. With the above information in mind, I respectfully urge you to fully and fairly consider providing Fiscal Year 13 HUD-VASH funding for homeless veterans in the Merced City and County CoC. Thank you for your consideration and your service to our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Costa". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive, with the first name "Jim" and the last name "Costa" clearly visible.

JIM COSTA
Member of Congress