

# NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

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## **USING VACANT FEDERAL PROPERTY TO HELP HOMELESS PEOPLE: NEW TOOLKIT HELPS CITIES AND NON-PROFITS APPLY FOR FREE RESOURCES UNDER UPDATED FEDERAL LAW**

WASHINGTON, DC - Local governments and nonprofit housing and service organizations have access to free property from the federal government to permanently house homeless people under Title V of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Thousands of properties are advertised each year, but the program continues to be underutilized. The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (the Law Center) has released a new toolkit to help local governments and service providers take advantage of this program.

While the Title V program has been in place since 1987, it was amended in December to clarify that surplus federal property can be used to permanently house homeless people. The program provides eligible homeless service providers with a right of first refusal to properties no longer needed by the federal government – including warehouses, administrative buildings, and vacant land. The federal government is required to deed or lease these properties to successful applicants for free.

“Permanent housing is the most effective and cost-effective solution to homelessness,” said Maria Foscarinis, Executive Director of the Law Center and primary architect of the original McKinney-Vento Act, including the Title V program. “Through the Title V program, cities and non-profit service providers can turn federal properties that are now sitting vacant—and costing taxpayers money—into housing and services, ending homelessness in a sustainable and cost-effective way.”

To date, over 2 million people are served each year in approximately 500 buildings and nearly 900 acres of land that have been transferred to cities and other eligible homeless service providers under Title V. Yet, this is a small fraction of the Title V program’s untapped potential given the number of properties made available through the Title V program each year.

To assist eligible providers with the Title V program, the Law Center has released a toolkit, [“Public Property/Public Need: A toolkit for using vacant federal property to end homelessness”](#) designed to help interested governments and nonprofit organizations identify and successfully apply for properties available through the Title V program.

“With shrinking federal supports, rising housing costs, and city budgets stretched to their limits, local governments and other homeless services agencies must make full use of all available resources,” added Tristia Bauman, Senior Attorney at the Law Center.

You can learn more about the Title V program and the Law Center’s toolkit in a webinar hosted by the Law Center on April 25<sup>th</sup> at 2pm ET/11am PT. You can register for the webinar [here](#).

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*The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty ([www.nlchp.org](http://www.nlchp.org)) is the only national organization dedicated solely to using the power of the law to prevent and end homelessness. With the support of a large network of pro bono lawyers, we address the immediate and long-term needs of people who are homeless or at risk through outreach and training, advocacy, impact litigation, and public education.*