

Proposed by Mayor Begich of Anchorage for consideration in June 2006
United States Conference of Mayors Resolution

**Expanding HUD's Definition of Homelessness:
Providing Local Flexibility, Responding to Families, Children, and Youth**

WHEREAS, in no town, city or state in America can an individual or family working full-time and earning the minimum wage, or receiving assistance under the Supplemental Security Income or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families programs, afford a one- or two-bedroom apartment at the fair market rental rate established by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and

WHEREAS, in its "Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities," the United States Conference of Mayors reports that requests for shelter by families with children went unmet 32 percent of the time in 2005; and 57% of reporting cities stated that homeless families may have to break-up in order to find shelter; and

WHEREAS, at least 3,500,000 persons in the United States are likely to experience homelessness during a year, 40 percent of whom are children; and

WHEREAS, families with children who cannot access shelters cannot consider the streets an option due to child welfare concerns, and therefore stay temporarily with friends or relatives or in motels, frequently moving between multiple locations; and

WHEREAS, children in these living situations face serious risks to their health and well-being, including safety issues and high rates of mobility that disrupt child development; and

WHEREAS, families without stable housing face transportation barriers which make job retention and children's educational continuity difficult; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development definition of homelessness excludes people who stay temporarily with others and in motels, thereby denying communities flexibility to address locally assessed needs, and preventing vulnerable populations from receiving the housing assistance they need; and

WHEREAS, other federal definitions of homelessness, such as the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act and the Violence Against Women Act, are responsive to families and youth by expressly including people who stay temporarily with others and in motels; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the United States Conference of Mayors does hereby request that the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development include within its definition of homelessness people who are sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons, and those who are staying in motels because of the lack of adequate alternative accommodations.