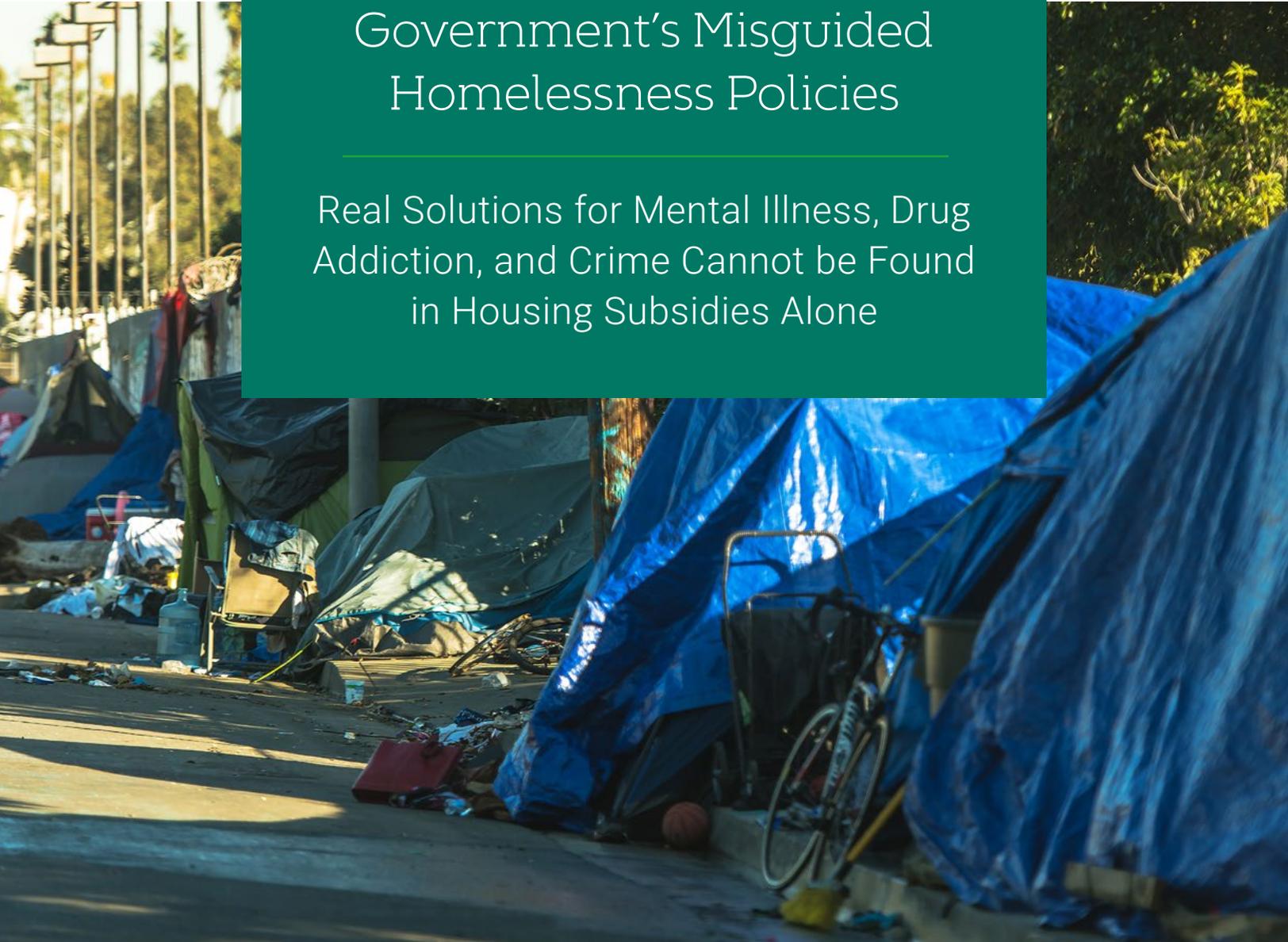




How Congress Can Reform Government's Misguided Homelessness Policies

Real Solutions for Mental Illness, Drug
Addiction, and Crime Cannot be Found
in Housing Subsidies Alone



DISCOVERY INSTITUTE



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Executive Summary



America is suffering a complicated homelessness tragedy in myriad cities and rural areas. Huge sums of government money have been thrown at the problem, most notably in housing programs, but also indirectly in the criminal justice system (police, courts, and jails) and hospital emergency rooms. The homelessness epidemic also drains private charitable resources and suppresses economic growth and development in many communities. Lax enforcement of borders is allowing deadly drugs into the country, worsening the conditions found in homeless encampments.

Any efforts to address this web of interlocking crises are doomed to failure if they begin with an inadequate diagnosis of the causes. Though lack of housing is a major factor in what we call homelessness, it is erroneous to view homelessness as *primarily*—let alone *solely*—a housing problem that can be solved through a “Housing First” approach that

ignores untreated mental illness, and with “harm reduction” projects that enable addicts to continue devastating drug habits.

Data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) confirm dramatic nationwide increases in homelessness, as illustrated in the

charts in the full report (see below). The total number of individuals experiencing homelessness within all five HUD homelessness categories is approaching 1.2 million, and unsheltered homelessness increased 20.5% over the five pre-COVID years – a dramatic shift from the drop of 31.4% between 2007-2014, before Housing First was officially adopted by the federal government.

Children are hit especially hard. The total number of children experiencing homelessness increased from 679,724 in the 2006-2007 school year to 1,508,265 in the 2017-2018 school year, a pre-COVID increase of 122%. The number of children

With Housing First, the Obama Administration said it could end veteran homelessness by 2015, chronic homelessness by 2016 and family homelessness by 2020. Additionally, advocates argued that the Housing First approach would end all types of homelessness by 2023.

in unsheltered situations (on the street and in vehicles) more than doubled between the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years.

The federal government has attempted to mask the magnitude of the crisis in at least two ways. First, citing the COVID pandemic, HUD stopped collecting relevant data on unsheltered homelessness in 2020. More disingenuously, HUD resorted to an accounting gimmick to reclassify over 100,000 individuals from transitional programs (considered to be experiencing homelessness) to Rapid Rehousing programs (deemed no longer experiencing homelessness). This, even though the individuals were mostly in the same rooms, in the same buildings, being housed by the same agencies, for the same period of time.

The federal policy of Housing First is at the heart of America's deteriorating homelessness problem. Supported by powerful and self-serving interests, this approach is embraced by many state and local jurisdictions, as well as the White House and Congress. Housing (to repeat) should be part of any homelessness program. But, by insisting that subsidized housing be provided to people experiencing homelessness without time limits or any requirements that individuals participate in wraparound services (such as mental illness clinical services and treatment, substance use disorder treatment, job training, and job retention programs), this approach has become a "housing only" solution in practice. **In essence, we have created an enormous federal homelessness assistance program which is functionally equivalent to HUD Section 8 Housing – but with no rules.**

The results have been disastrous. The dramatic shift in the trajectory of homelessness numbers mentioned above correlate with the federal adoption of Housing First. Namely, unsheltered street homelessness rose by more than 20% even as subsidized housing vouchers went up more than 40%.

California provides an alarming example of the failures of Housing First. In 2016, California enacted a law that required that every state dollar spent on homelessness be spent on Housing First programs. **From 2015 (the year before the new state policy) to 2019, unsheltered street-level homelessness in California rose 47.1%** in just four years. California now boasts almost half of America's unsheltered street-level homeless population and nearly one in four of America's overall homeless population, even though it contains only 12% of the U.S. population. Only this year did the state pass a "Care Court" program that may—in a year or two—make it easier to get help for people with serious mental illness. Also, a recent settlement announcement by the LA Alliance for Human Rights commits LA County to more mental health and addiction treatment outreach and beds, not just housing.

Results within other jurisdictions also illustrate the folly of Housing First. In Seattle/King County the number of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness rose to more than 5,500, and gun crimes tied to homelessness encampments jumped 122% during the first half of 2022. In Portland, Oregon, people experiencing homelessness comprised 50% of all arrests between 2017 and 2020, even though their share of the population was less than 2%. In New York City, the number of deaths of people experiencing homelessness more than doubled in a three-year period from 2018 to 2021, up to 640 deaths, with the most frequent cause of death being drug overdose.

"Housing First" Is Not Working

Advocates had claimed that shifting to a Housing First approach, with its massive increases in subsidized housing vouchers, would end homelessness in ten years (i.e. by 2023). The failure of their prediction is rooted in flawed assumptions about the nature of the crisis, especially the prevalence of untreated mental illness and drug use disorders within the homelessness community. In their 2019 ground-

breaking study, the California Policy Lab, a non-partisan research institute based at the University of California, found that 78% of the unsheltered homelessness population reported having mental health conditions and 50% reported that their mental health conditions contributed to their loss of housing. Additionally, 75% of the unsheltered population reported substance abuse conditions, and 51% reported that the use of drugs or alcohol contributed to their loss of housing.

Because of the funding restrictions dictating how homelessness assistance dollars are to be spent, the intensive treatment and clinical services most needed by so many people living on the street have become an afterthought. Consequently, the federal Housing First approach has led to the following adverse effects to individuals and families (which are explained more fully in the full report):

1. Elimination of service participation requirements has removed incentives for individuals to participate in effective programs and therapies.
2. Elimination of federal funding for intensive wraparound services has undercut services needed for treatment and recovery (e.g. for mental illness and substance use disorders).
3. The chance to develop customized treatment approaches has been diminished by a one-size-fits-all housing approach.
4. Concurrent defunding of emergency services has led to increased negative outcomes, including death.
5. Program focus has been lost by changing the policy goal from self-sufficiency to increased inputs in the form of housing vouchers.
6. The expansion of this federal Housing First policy to state and local governments has dramatically increased homelessness.

Of course, the deemphasis on treatment of the seriously (and often dangerously) mentally ill did not begin with Housing First. Deinstitutionalization of psychiatric patients is a policy now six decades

in effect, dramatically illustrated by the fact that the U.S. has only 5% as many psychiatric beds as it had fifty years ago. One of the most glaring examples of unintended consequence in American health history, the federal policy has led to untold suffering and death by consigning hundreds of thousands of seriously mentally ill people to the streets, homelessness encampments, jails and prisons, instead of to effective treatment.

The Time Has Come for Real Reform

Immediate policy changes are necessary to reverse the growing homelessness crisis. **Homelessness should be addressed primarily as a mental and behavioral health issue, rather than simply a housing issue.** Increasingly, American citizens demand reform – polling indicates homelessness is now the number one or number two local issue among voters in twenty of the highest populated cities in America, and homelessness continues to be the top statewide issue in many states.

Congress is encouraged to take the following actions to address the crisis, with a goal of helping to move as many people as possible out of homelessness and toward recovery and self-sufficiency. More detailed descriptions and justifications are provided in the full report.

1. Pass legislation directing HUD to eliminate Housing First as the primary approach to address homelessness, including in Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs), policies, rule-making, guidance, technical assistance, and in federal communications.
2. Pass the Housing PLUS Act to prohibit HUD from restricting or limiting Continuum of Care (CoC) funds (see CoC definition in glossary below) going to providers that require the provision of supportive services (such as addiction treatment or job counseling) or program participation requirements, or to faith-based organizations. The Act also requires that no less than 30% of CoC funding shall be used by recipients that provide or offer access to wraparound services.

3. Prioritize economic “self-sufficiency” as the primary measurement of effectiveness of all federal homelessness assistance programs rather than the number of housing vouchers distributed.
4. Prioritize trauma-informed wraparound services in all federal homelessness assistance programs by requiring that a minimum of 40% of CoC funding be used for direct trauma-informed wraparound services (such as mental illness clinical services and treatment, substance use disorder therapy and treatment, job training, and job retention) and limiting housing vouchers to 60% of funding.
5. Require participation in treatment and training activities when enrolled in federally funded homelessness assistance programs, similar to PELL Grants, unemployment assistance, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
6. Restore funding for emergency programs, which are an important steppingstone on the path to self-sufficiency.
7. Replace the Continuum of Care (CoC) system with a state block grant system to ensure more efficient delivery of services, eliminate conflicts of interest, increase accountability, and improve outcomes. Alternatively, Congress should reform the governance structures of CoCs to eliminate conflicts of interest and expand membership to include state and local elected officials as well as general public stakeholders for greater accountability.
8. Eliminate the Institutions for Mental Diseases Exclusion (“IMD Exclusion”) in Medicaid to increase federal reimbursements for inpatient mental illness and substance use disorder treatment. The exclusion currently prevents many mentally ill people from receiving the treatment they need to avoid landing up on the streets or in emergency rooms or jails.
9. Review the budget of the National Institute of Mental Health to ensure its priorities reflect the actual problems of neglect seen in the day-to-day care of the mentally ill, especially those who are homeless.
10. Incentivize local governments to reduce or eliminate building fees and burdensome regulations to enable affordable housing construction.



Homelessness: A Growing Crisis in American Communities

Homelessness has skyrocketed in the United States over the last decade and has reached crisis levels in many American cities. This is a tragedy for those caught up in the heartbreaking cycle of homelessness that plagues communities. Attendant issues include overwhelmed emergency rooms, drug overdoses, damage to public spaces, urban decay, overcrowded jails, decreased public safety, and intimidating chaos on many streets. Small businesses are especially hurt, since patrons are reluctant to journey into areas with high levels of homelessness. Fixing the homelessness problem will cost money. But not fixing it is already costing plenty — and letting the problem fester will cost even more.

HUD Documenting Dramatic Rise in Adult Homelessness

The graphs below, based on data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) *Annual Homeless Assessment Reports* (AHARs) and the U.S. Department of Education (ED) *Annual Federal Data Summary School Years – Education for Homeless Children and Youth*, illustrate the magnitude of the homelessness crisis in the U.S. over the last decade.

The federal government has two different formal definitions of homelessness, as well as methodologies and metrics to measure the number of people experiencing homelessness.

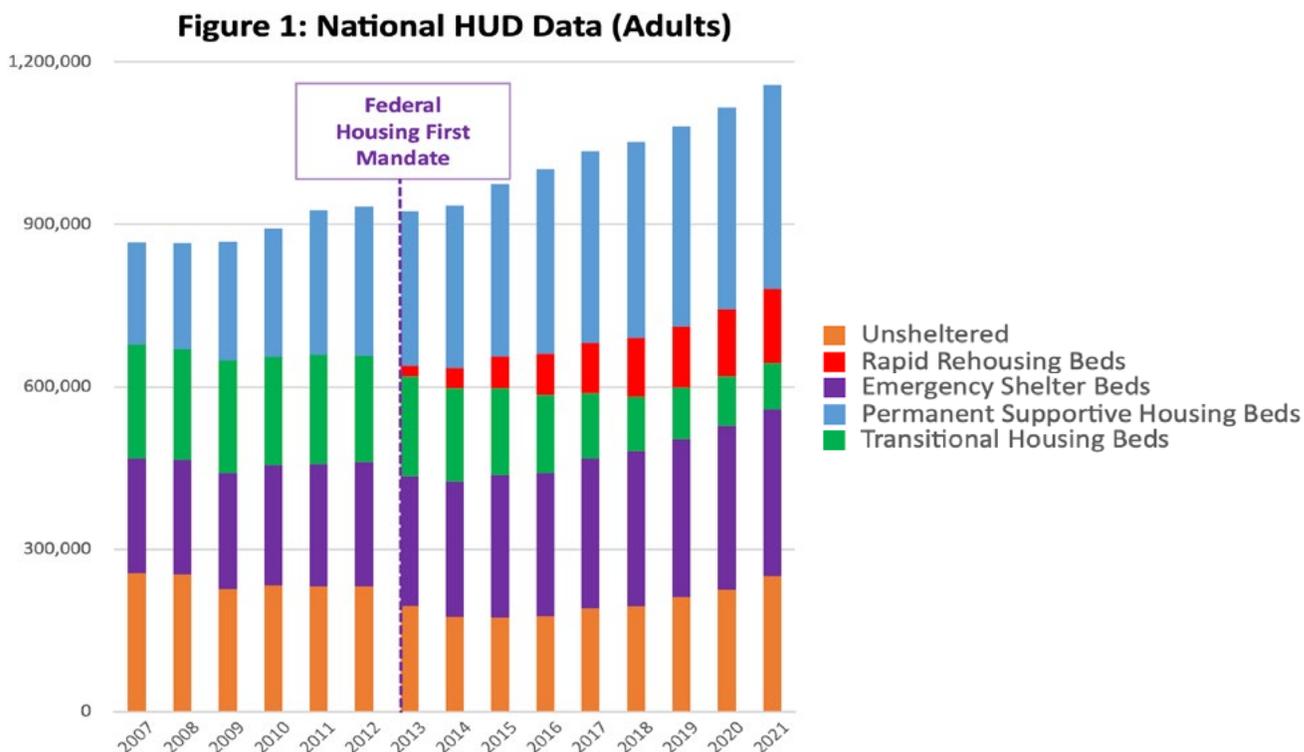
HUD primarily tracks adults, while ED tracks child and youth homelessness per the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. While each agency’s data is explored separately below, both federal cabinet departments report that homelessness is increasing across all populations, regardless of the differences in how homelessness is defined.

HUD aggregates data from 400 regional Continuums of Care (CoC) that conduct annual “Point-in-Time Counts” (PITCs). Additional data is stored in each CoC’s Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS), which reports a variety of demographic and statistical information to HUD for its annual reports. HUD’s general definition of a person experiencing homelessness is one who “lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”¹

Per HUD’s *Annual Homeless Assessment Reports* (AHARs) and PITCs, individuals experiencing homelessness are grouped into five sub-categories based on what type of housing they are living in:

1. **Unsheltered** (also known as street-level homelessness),
2. **Emergency Shelters** (e.g. Citygate rescue missions and Salvation Army centers),
3. **Transitional Housing** (subsidized apartments with wraparound services for up to two years),
4. **Rapid Rehousing** (the most radical form of subsidized “Housing First” units that have no participation requirements), and
5. **Permanent Supportive Housing** (subsidized lease-based housing units, typically supported by vouchers).

Figure 1 illustrates the dramatic nationwide increases in homelessness. The stacked colored bars illustrate those living **unsheltered**, in **emergency shelters**, in **transitional housing**, in **rapid rehousing**, and in **permanent supportive housing** (unsheltered number for 2021 is estimated – HUD did not provide data). When totaled together, these latter five cohorts reflect the aggregated year-round homelessness count in the United States. The vertical dotted line is the inflection point when HUD formally shifted federal homelessness policies and funding to a “Housing First” philosophy per the 2013 HUD Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA).





Key Takeaways:

- The total number of individuals experiencing homelessness within all five HUD categories is approaching 1.2 million individuals, not the half a million number that is frequently incorrectly cited by media sources.
- HUD artificially counts those participating in permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing programs as “not experiencing homelessness” while those in transitional housing programs are counted as “experiencing homelessness.” This gimmick artificially lowers the number of people considered to be experiencing homelessness. Sound policy decisions require objective and accurate data.
- Even though federal funding of the homelessness assistance system has significantly expanded after the policy shift to the Housing First approach, unsheltered homelessness rose dramatically between 2014 to 2020. The total number of unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness increased 20.5% over the five pre-COVID years after HUD’s adoption of Housing First.²
- In 2022, the Biden Administration did not report the national unsheltered count for 2021. This omission was likely made to hide the dramatic increases in unsheltered homelessness since the onset of the Housing First approach.
- Prior to the implementation of Housing First, the total number of unsheltered individuals had dropped 31.4% between 2007-2014, when intensive wraparound services for participants were required for most homelessness assistance program participants. The downward trend ended with HUD’s adoption of the Housing First approach.
- The programmatic changes required by the 2013 HUD NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability) penalized service agencies and programs that included service participation requirements and incentivized those that included no such service participation requirements. Furthermore, funding guidelines and system performance measures prioritized speed-of-placement rather than quality of placement, resulting in replacing high-quality recovery and rehabilitative programs with subsidized housing absent of participation requirements in treatment programs. **In essence, we have created a federal homelessness assistance program which is functionally equivalent to Section 8 housing with no rules, no treatment programs, and no participation requirements.**

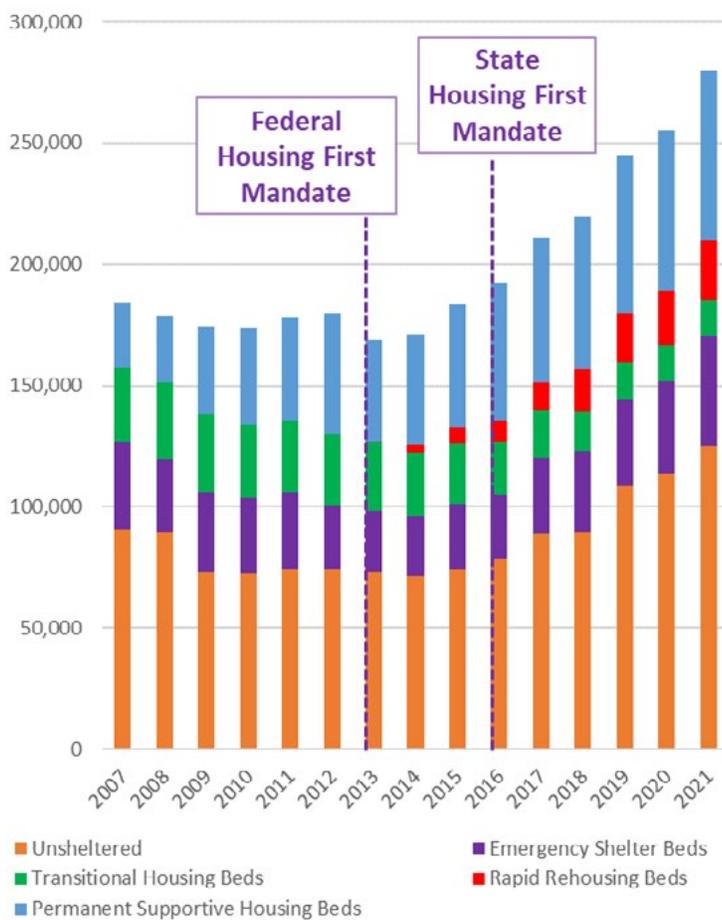
HUD Documents an Even Higher Homelessness Rise of Adults in California

Figure 2 below focuses solely on the State of California. As with Figure 1, the stacked colored bars illustrate those living unsheltered, in emergency shelters, in transitional housing, in rapid rehousing, and in permanent supportive housing (unsheltered number for 2021 is estimated – HUD did not provide data).

California state data is revealing because California requires 100% of state funding to go to Housing First programs. Consequently, 100% of federal and state homeless assistance funds go solely to Housing First programs.

Additionally, the State of California encourages local governments and CoCs to restrict their funding to the Housing First approach. Consequently, almost all local jurisdictions within the state—including the City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County—require government funding of all types (national, state, and local) to fund Housing First programs. The State of California, therefore, provides a statistically controlled study of the outcomes of this one-size-fits-all policy. The results of going “all in” on Housing First have been devastating and have increased human suffering.

Figure 2: HUD Data for California (Adults)



Key Takeaways:

- California communities have experienced worse outcomes than other parts of the country.
- California rates of unsheltered homelessness jumped after the 2013 federal implementation of Housing First. Rates jumped again after California mandated that all state funding for homelessness assistance be restricted to Housing First programs.
- Homelessness in California has been increasing at a faster rate than the rest of the U.S. **From 2015 to 2019 (starting the year before passage of the law mandating that all state funding be used for Housing First programs), unsheltered homelessness rose 47.1%.** This increase occurred prior to the COVID pandemic in 2020.³
- From 2015 to 2019, following the passage of the law mandating that all state funding go to Housing First programs, overall homelessness in California rose 33.8% (again all before the COVID pandemic).

Department of Education Reports Dramatic Increase in Number of Children Experiencing Homelessness

The U.S. Department of Education *Annual Federal Data Summary School Years – Education for Homeless Children and Youth* aggregates data provided by local and state school administrators for each Pre-K-12 school student who experiences homelessness.⁴ ED’s definition of homelessness within Section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Act defines children and youth experiencing homelessness as children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence at least once over a school year.⁵

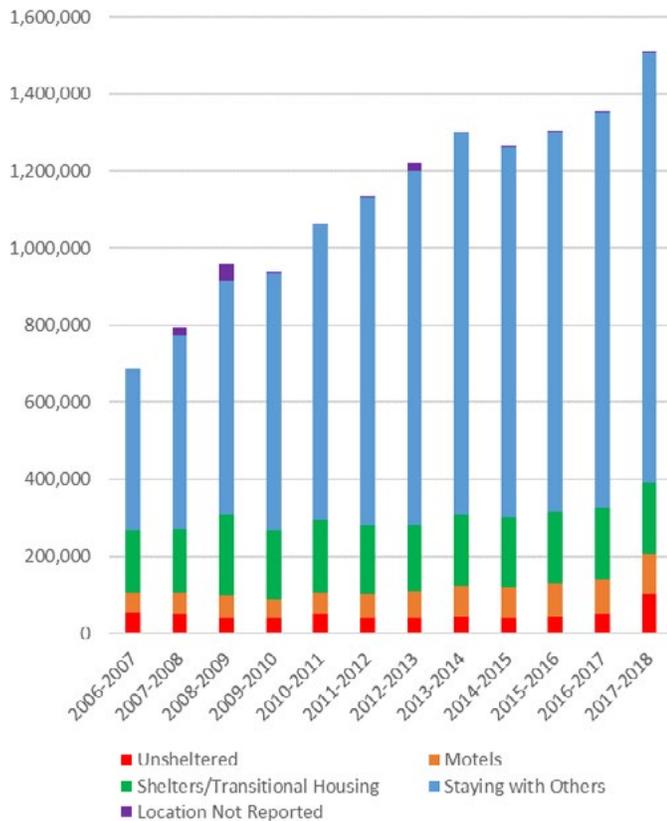
The annual report groups children experiencing homelessness into five cohorts based on where they are living:

1. Unsheltered,
2. Motels and Hotels,
3. Shelters and Transitional Housing,
4. Staying with Others, and
5. Location Not Reported.

Figure 3 illustrates the dramatic increases in nationwide child and youth homelessness. The stacked colored bars illustrate unsheltered, motels and hotels, shelters and transitional housing, staying with others, and those whose location is not reported.

Children often start by staying with others and then move into motels, shelters, or the street, once they overstay their welcome with friends and family. In accordance with ED’s codifying guidelines, the first type of homelessness a child experiences categorizes the child’s status throughout the year, which does not necessarily reflect the current type of homelessness that child is experiencing. Since most children start experiencing homelessness in the “living with others” category, it is always overrepresented in the data, while those unsheltered and staying in shelters are underrepresented.

Figure 3: National Department of Education Data (Families with Children)



Key Takeaways:

- The number of children experiencing homelessness continues to rise.
- The total number of children experiencing homelessness increased from 679,724 in the 2006-2007 school year to 1,508,265 in the 2017-2018 school year, a pre-COVID increase of 122%.
- The total number of children living in shelters, transitional housing, motels, and in unsheltered situations increased from 283,137 in the 2012-2013 school year to 390,760 in the 2017-2018 school year – a 38.1% pre-COVID increase.
- The number of children in unsheltered situations (on the street and in vehicles) more than doubled between the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years – a 104% increase.
- A sizeable percentage of adults experiencing homelessness first experienced homelessness as a child. For example, HUD’s point-in-time count survey reports that 20% of adults experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles first experienced homelessness as children. In Seattle and Santa Cruz, the number is 18%, while San Francisco’s rate is 15%.

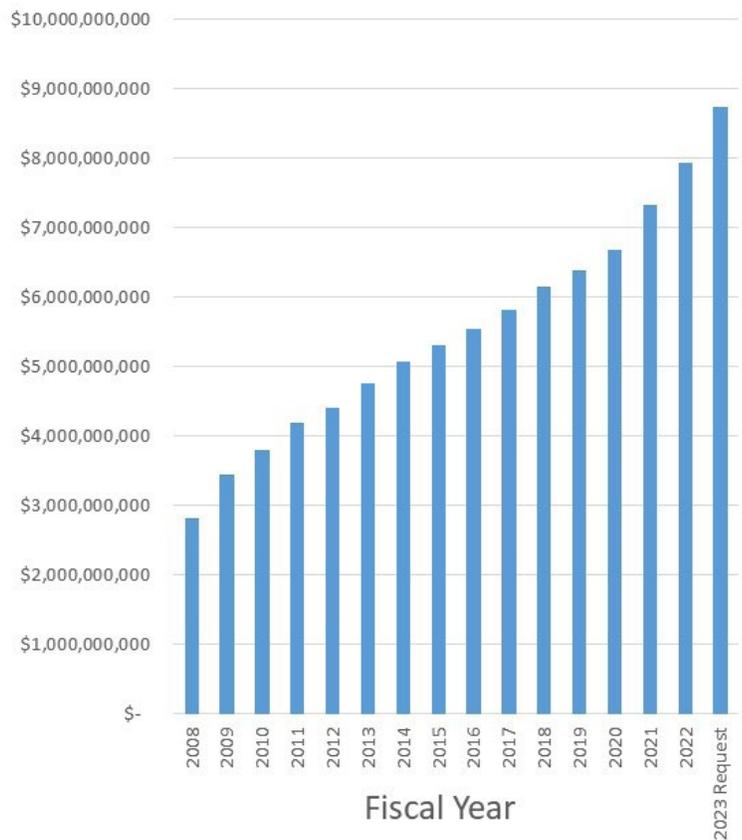


Homelessness is Increasing Despite Dramatic Increases in Federal Funding

The substantial increases in the number of people experiencing homelessness indicated by the HUD and ED data presented above have occurred even as federal funding for programs intended to address homelessness has dramatically increased. In 2022, Congress appropriated more than \$7.9 billion for targeted homelessness assistance programs – President Biden has asked for an additional \$8.7 billion in the FY 2023 federal budget.⁶ This represents more than a three-fold increase from the \$2.8 billion spent in 2008.

These amounts do not include the more than \$4 billion in directly dedicated homelessness assistance and the more than \$64.9 billion in indirect homelessness assistance allocated in the CARES Act and American Rescue Plan COVID-19 relief packages.^{7,8} See Figure 4 for an illustration of the year-over-year spending since 2009.

Figure 4: Federal Homelessness Spending



“Housing First” Is Not Working



Federal Government Formally Embraces Housing First in 2013

The 2013 Housing and Urban Development Notice of Funding Availability (HUD NOFA) formally shifted federal policies and funding to a “Housing First” philosophy, which offers government-subsidized homelessness housing vouchers to individuals with no participation and treatment requirements (such as attending life-skills classes or seeing a drug addiction counselor).⁹ **Disconnecting housing subsidies from any participation requirement for rehabilitation and treatment is the most radically negative single change to federal homelessness assistance policy in decades.**

In addition to formally prioritizing the Housing First approach over all other homelessness assistance strategies, the 2013 HUD NOFA also, for the first time, formally funded rapid rehousing subsidies while simultaneously phasing out funding for transitional housing. These changes fundamentally altered the way homelessness assistance is allocated by the federal government.

HUD’s implementation of Housing First led to changes in federal regulations, grant application scoring factors, and program guidance to local communities. Taken together, local governments and Continuums-of-Care (CoCs) were heavily pressured to adopt Housing First policies to continue to receive federal funding. Local agencies that did not conform to these guidelines were de-funded. These changes impacted the programs and organizations that make up most of the direct front-line homelessness service providers, including faith-based and transitional housing providers. Housing First has essentially become Section 8 federally subsidized housing vouchers without any rules.

Disastrous Results

The results of the shift to Housing First have been disastrous. Shortly after the policy shift away from requiring service participation when receiving homelessness assistance, HUD measured unsheltered homelessness rose from 175,399 in 2014 to 211,293 in 2019, a 20.5% increase in five

years (all pre-COVID).¹⁰ During the same period, the number of individuals receiving subsidized Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing vouchers rose from 338,065 to 482,254, a 42.7% increase. **In short, even though the number of housing vouchers increased more than 40%, unsheltered street homelessness increased more than 20%. If the Housing First approach were working to reduce overall homelessness, unsheltered street level homelessness should have dropped dramatically. Instead, the opposite occurred.**

The increase in homelessness has occurred even as permanent supportive “Housing First” units have doubled, Rapid Rehousing units have increased sixfold, and federal spending on homelessness has more than tripled.

The negative impacts of skyrocketing homelessness on communities are manifold, including increased demand on local government resources, including, most notably, the criminal justice system (e.g. police, courts, and jails) and emergency rooms. The growing crisis of homelessness drains non-profit resources, increases drug overdoses, exacerbates urban decay, and suppresses economic growth and development.

Communities Are in Crisis

Beyond the bleak national numbers, the data demonstrate especially dramatic rises in the hundreds of cities (and states) that have aggressively embraced the flawed Housing First philosophy – such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, Portland, Seattle, and New York City.

California provides an especially alarming example of the failure of Housing First. As discussed above, the California legislature passed a bill in 2016 that required every state dollar spent on homelessness must be spent on Housing First programs. **Consequently, unsheltered street-level homelessness in California rose 47.1%**

in just four years and overall homelessness increased 30.7% (pre-COVID).

California now boasts almost half of America’s unsheltered street-level homeless population and nearly one in four of America’s overall homeless population (all five HUD AHAR categories), even though it contains only 12% of the United States population.¹¹ **If Housing First worked as promised by advocates, California should have the lowest rates of homelessness in the U.S., not the highest.**

Some progress was made this year in California where a law recommended by the governor was passed creating Care Courts that at least offer the prospect that—in a year or two—people with severe mental illness who are experiencing homelessness can be required to get treatment. Fought by the ACLU from a misguided fear of civil liberties abuse, the fact that the law was passed overwhelmingly in the legislature is a sign of increasing public desire for reform. Likewise, a successful lawsuit by the LA Alliance for Human Rights commits LA County to increase mental health and substance abuse outreach and treatment as part of its vast housing expenditures. But California still has a long way to go and is moving slowly.

The experiences of other jurisdictions also illustrate the folly of Housing First. In Seattle/King County the number of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness rose to more than 5,500, and the Seattle Police Department reports that gun crimes tied to homelessness encampments jumped 122% during the first half of 2022.¹² In Portland, Oregon, people experiencing homelessness comprised 50% of all arrests between 2017 and 2020, even though the population of people experiencing homelessness was less than 2%.¹³ In New York City, the number of deaths of people experiencing homelessness more than doubled in a three-year period from 2018 to 2021, up to 640 deaths, with the most frequent cause of death being drug overdose.¹⁴

Exacerbating the negative effects of federal and state Housing First policies are poorly conceived local policies that significantly raise housing construction costs to make housing unaffordable for many, especially low-income Americans. Chief among them are onerous regulations and exorbitant local construction permitting fees that inflate housing construction costs. Not limited to California, excessive fees and regulations have made housing unaffordable in many parts of the country, especially in communities where the cost of living is the highest.

Attempts to Mask the Problem

The federal government has attempted to mask the magnitude of the crisis in at least two ways. First, due to the COVID pandemic, HUD stopped collecting relevant data on homelessness in 2020. More disingenuously, HUD resorted to an accounting gimmick that reclassified assistance programs to produce an artificial, short-term public relations success. After the 2013 HUD NOFA, changes to annual HUD NOFA deprioritized transitional housing in favor of Rapid Rehousing. Consequently, 101,746 individuals were “reclassified” from transitional programs (which are considered to be still experiencing homelessness) to Rapid Rehousing programs (which are deemed no longer experiencing homelessness).

This definitional sleight-of-hand was based on the fact that, though both programs have the same HUD regulatory 24-month limit, HUD considers people living in rapid rehousing programs as no longer experiencing homelessness. This is because they are housed through a “lease” and, therefore, are covered under the Fair Housing Act.¹⁵ On the other hand, people living in transitional housing are still considered by HUD to be experiencing homelessness because those programs often provide housing through a “participation contract” rather than a lease. In short, under current federal policy, Rapid Rehousing participants are considered tenants while transitional housing participants are considered people experiencing

homelessness. It is bureaucratic nonsense meant to bolster the claims of Housing First advocates.

It is important to note that the 101,746 reclassified individuals were mostly in the same rooms, in the same buildings, being housed by the same agencies – yet deemed no longer to be experiencing homelessness. These types of short-term accounting gimmicks fail to seriously address the problem of increasing homelessness.

Despite the attempts to hide the true magnitude of the homelessness crisis, the data clearly proves the Housing First advocates wrong.

Why has Housing First Failed to End Homelessness as Promised?

More than a decade ago, **progressive Senators and House Members and other advocates of Housing First argued that the approach would end all types of homelessness by 2023.¹⁶ With Housing First, the Obama Administration said it could end veteran homelessness by 2015, chronic homelessness by 2016 and family homelessness by 2020.¹⁷**

Unfortunately however, as documented above, even though federal spending has nearly tripled, homelessness has not ended, but has increased dramatically, even before COVID.

How could advocates have been so wrong about Housing First ending homelessness by 2023? In short, the Housing First approach is fatally flawed. By focusing on rapidly placing individuals into housing regardless of whether the placement is clinically appropriate, the approach works against the achievement of long-term outcomes, such as graduating out of homelessness or attaining lasting housing self-sufficiency. **By ignoring the root causes of homelessness – such as untreated mental illness combined with substance use disorders – Housing First is at best an expensive short-term band-aid that only addresses the symptom of an individual’s living on the street.**

These flawed theoretical assumptions allowed subsidized housing vouchers to be used as substitutes for mental illness treatment and substance use disorder therapy. In addition, Washington-based policy advocates who had little or no front-line experience providing direct services did not realize how prevalent untreated mental illness and co-presenting substance use disorders were within the community of homelessness. For example, in 2014, the President and CEO of the National Alliance to End Homelessness claimed that only 20% percent of the people experiencing homelessness have a mental illness or a substance abuse problem.

Yet the California Policy Lab, a non-partisan research institute based at the University of California, found in their 2019 groundbreaking study of 64,000 people experiencing homelessness that **78% of the unsheltered homelessness population reported having mental health conditions, and 50% reported that their mental health conditions contributed to their loss of housing.** Additionally, **75% of the unsheltered population reported having substance abuse conditions, and 51% reported that the use of drugs or alcohol contributed to their loss of housing.**¹⁸

Unfortunately, because of the expense of creating permanent supportive housing, and the funding restrictions dictating how homelessness assistance dollars are to be spent, the intensive treatment and clinical services so many people living on the street need have become an afterthought.

Housing vouchers are subsidies and do not have the ability to treat mental illness, nor do they address substance use disorders. The failure of Housing First is graphically illustrated by the many individuals isolated in apartments in terrible living conditions with no treatment for mental illnesses nor therapy for substance use disorders, whose stories often end in tragedy. For example, a study

of Boston's chronically homeless unsheltered population shows low housing retention and nearly half of the studied cohort (45%) died while housed. The study concludes "Housing stability for this vulnerable population likely requires more robust and flexible and long-term medical and social supports."¹⁹ Similar poor outcomes have occurred in Los Angeles with Project Room Key.

Subsidized housing and converted motels are highly inadequate substitutes for treatment. Housing First warehouses people, without care, into isolated living arrangements in which drug use and untreated mental illness tend to proliferate. The Los Angeles Times reports that the deaths that occurred in Project Room Key units increased the number of deaths due to the unabated presence of methamphetamine and fentanyl.²⁰ Meth and fentanyl were directly responsible for the increase in overdose deaths and also contributed to other causes of death such as heart failure, suicide due to drug-induced psychosis, and brain hemorrhage.²¹

Housing First is based on a faulty premise that homelessness is simply a housing issue which can be solved with subsidized housing. In fact, the root cause of most homelessness in the United States is untreated mental illness, often combined with co-presenting substance use disorders (SUDs). Policies that fail to address these root causes, when combined with policies that make housing unaffordable, only exacerbate the crisis.

Housing First is Impeding Effective Help

Not only has Housing First led to increases in homelessness, the approach has also harmed families and individuals by impeding service providers from deploying treatments that effectively address the root causes of their predicament.

Specifically, we note the following adverse effects of the federal Housing First approach:

1

The elimination of service participation requirements has removed incentives for individuals to participate in effective programs and therapies.

The elimination of service participation requirements — such as robust case management and treatment for substance use disorders — has adversely impacted many service providers (including many faith-based organizations) by stripping them of their best intervention tools. These organizations had used these requirements successfully for years as an incentive to improve the mental and physical health of program participants and to promote self-sufficiency.

Service participation requirements have been successfully employed in most other federal social service programs and were integral to the welfare policy reforms enacted under President Clinton in 1996. For example, Pell Grants require recipients to make satisfactory academic progress, attend classes, and maintain a passing grade point average. Unemployment benefits require program participation, including demonstrated participation in prescriptive job searches. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which provides benefits to families in poverty, requires beneficiaries to work or advance their education.

Many Housing First proponents argue that participation requirements are barriers to shelter and housing. They claim that people experiencing homelessness refuse to accept offers of shelter and housing because they do not want to or cannot participate. The growth of homeless encampments shows that refusal of shelter and services exists even with “low barrier” policies. **The real barrier to recovery is the lack of participation in robust treatment services, especially for mental health and substance use disorder issues.**

Participation requirements are the key element to improved health and increased self-sufficiency that leads to reduced numbers of people experiencing homelessness.

2

The elimination of federal funding for intensive wraparound services has pulled the plug on the critical services needed for treatment and recovery (e.g. for treatment of mental illness and substance use disorders).

For most, homelessness is a medical and clinical issue rooted in untreated mental illness, often combined with substance use disorders. Consequently, the best intervention is robust trauma-informed care along with wraparound services such as mental health treatment, substance use disorder interventions, medical provisions, life-skill classes, and job training and retention.

However, because of the shift in federal policy and funding, many local and county governments have reduced or eliminated treatment services needed to address mental illness and addiction head on. Instead, they often take the short-sighted, least-resistance route of short-term spending on (federally subsidized) housing vouchers rather than providing the long-term treatment and recovery services needed to address the underlying causes of homelessness.

Making matters worse, the few locations where voluntary services are offered are often poorly funded and understaffed. And absent participation requirements, programs like addiction services, workforce training, and life-skills classes are frequently avoided by individuals who might benefit.

Housing First’s prohibition against participation requirements and its myopic emphasis on funding housing subsidies has practically stopped funding treatment programs of any clinical benefit within homelessness programs. After stopping participation requirements and stopping funding of treatment, it is no wonder why homelessness is skyrocketing.

3

The movement away from customized treatment approaches to a one-size-fits-all housing approach has limited treatment approaches.

Moving an unsheltered individual to housing provides a number of health and emotional benefits. However, housing alone does not lead to sustained mental health nor recovery from addictions. **A housing voucher does not kick a drug habit, address chemical instability, nor teach one how to write a job resume.** Yet Housing First advocates argue housing vouchers will end all types of homelessness. This is akin to providing the same medical treatment to a person with an infection, a broken leg, or experiencing a stroke.

To be clear, Housing First vouchers are a one-size-fits-all approach, with no room for variations in treatment or alternative interventions. Housing *First* has become housing *Only*.

The Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness (ICPH), points out that the one-size-fits-all approach does not work for all populations nor in all locations. Specifically, ICPH did a study of New York City's Housing First program, which has been practiced on a large scale for an extended period of time.²² Though Housing First advocates had promised the recidivism rate would drop, the ICPH found that after "Rapidly Rehousing" 33,000 families from 2005 to 2011, the recidivism back to shelter rate actually increased. ICPH posits that Rapid Rehousing is analogous to a steroid shot – the pain temporarily goes away but comes back quickly, since the underlying issues have not been addressed. ICPH goes on to say that there is a lack of evidence showing long-term success of Rapid Rehousing and Housing First.

Tragically, a one-size-fits-all approach can actually harm individuals experiencing homelessness who need and benefit from customized, trauma-informed wraparound services. When the only

intervention is "housing," little or no treatment is provided and few clinical outcomes are achieved. We will fail if Housing First is the only tool in the toolbox.

4

The defunding of emergency services has led to increased negative outcomes, including death.

De-funding of emergency services, like emergency sheltering and mental health services, has reduced critical front-line life-saving services for individuals living on the street. Before the 2013 HUD NOFA was implemented, funding for the homelessness Continuum of Cares were evenly balanced – funding about one-third each for emergency services, transitional housing, and long-term housing.

After the changes implemented by the 2013 HUD NOVA, the federal government terminated funding of homelessness emergency services and began to phase out funding of transitional housing in favor of funding Housing First vouchers. This destabilized the balance between the three equally important and critical phases of Continuum of Cares described above.

As a result, emergency services have been replaced with housing outreach workers with little expertise and few resources to help those in need. Their objective is limited to recruiting people experiencing homelessness into Housing First programs, along with a bottle of water and words of comfort. Replacing emergency services with housing outreach workers tragically accepts the viewpoint that homelessness is a housing problem rather than a broader humanitarian crisis that can only be addressed through a holistic program focusing on the treatment of underlying causes.

The de-funding of critical emergency services has particularly restrained the ability of faith-based and non-profit agencies to help individuals in need.

5

In changing the ultimate goal from self-sufficiency to maximizing the number of vouchers distributed, Housing First has led to a loss of program focus.

The federal government currently measures success in addressing homelessness by how many, and how quickly, taxpayer-subsidized housing vouchers are distributed – regardless of whether the vouchers actually help pull people out of homelessness. **The government should instead gauge success by measuring self-sufficiency: the number of people who exit from homelessness over a sustained period.**

Federal programs instruct Continuums of Care to avoid objective, performance-oriented metrics. In fact, instead of measuring “outcomes,” HUD’s performance system measures “outputs” based on process-related performance of CoCs in providing housing. Even HUD’s metrics of income increases are belied by equating earned income from a job with government subsidies from various government programs. This represents yet another example of measuring the wrong thing.

The fatal flaw of Housing First should be obvious – the federal government is not measuring how many individuals attain self-sufficiency every year (i.e. no longer needing government-subsidized housing vouchers). Instead, they measure failure – the number of people dependent on government handouts.

Unfortunately, many Housing First advocates have aggressively resisted efforts to have meaningful and truthful measurements because this would spotlight how Housing First has failed to truly reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness.

6

The expansion of Housing First to state and local governments has dramatically increased homelessness.

Housing First grants have induced state and local governments to adopt the Housing First model, despite its failures. Contrary to the promises of Housing First advocates, the approach has not ended homelessness where it has been implemented. On the contrary, in many locales such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, as well as California as a whole, **adoption of the Housing First experiment has substantially increased the number of people experiencing homelessness.**

According to a recent survey, most citizens blame local mayors and city councilmembers for increases in homelessness.²³ But it is appropriate to lay much of the blame at the feet of the federal government. Since HUD exclusively promotes and funds Housing First throughout the U.S., many municipalities are limited in their responses to homelessness. Knowing that Housing First has not worked at a national level, why would we want to push this flawed policy onto local governments?

7

The issue of untreated mental illness is an inescapable and neglected part of the homelessness puzzle.

Starting in the Depression years of the 1930s and accelerating over the decades, the long-term neglect of mental hospital care by state governments became an embarrassment and even, in some cases, scandalous. Instead of improving care, policy makers de-institutionalized state mental health hospitals. The 1965 Medicaid bill, which provided support for funding of

state facilities that serve lower income people, specifically left out individuals in the age categories between 21 and 65, who often present with significant and serious mental illnesses and conditions. It was thought that this “Institutions of Mental Disease (“IMD”) Exclusion would hold down costs, take advantage of new medications, protect civil liberties and somehow enable people with mental illness or substance abuse issues to get good local community-based care.

In practice, however, it succeeded mainly in justifying states’ increasing failures to provide their own adequate funding for professional psychiatric care in state hospitals, while the patients released to home care and local clinics most often received ineffective or insufficient treatment. Among other things, small community clinics seldom can afford on-site professional psychiatric personnel that meet the needs of the seriously mentally ill. This meant that people treated at home or at smaller mental health clinics often wound up on the streets or in jail due to a lack of settings that could appropriately respond to crises, stabilize, and in many cases, provide residences for those experiencing serious mental illness.

There are now only five percent as many psychiatric beds in state hospitals as we had a half century ago. Indeed, **there are more people in psychiatric care in prisons than in hospital care making jails, prisons, and homeless encampments modern-day asylums.**

As Dr. Thomas Insel, recent Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, notes in his book *Healing*, “We so overcorrected the problematic state of institutions in the 1960’s that we effectively created an enormous deficit in funded psychiatric beds.” Federal funding for mental illness, meanwhile, tends to go to programs that assist persons with tractable neuroses, rather than resistant psychoses. Even middle-class and wealthy Americans in many communities find hospital care and long-term adult residences for mental illness hard to acquire, which is a largely unreported calamity for thousands of families in America and is reflected, among other things, in rising suicide rates. But the impact on homelessness is especially acute.

The Time Has Come for Real Reform



As described in this report, Housing First has been an abject failure in addressing the growing crisis of homelessness. The approach is built on a false premise—that homelessness is primarily a housing issue rather than a mental illness issue with co-presenting substance use disorders.

A reverse course is needed. **Rather than seeking to increase the number of taxpayer-subsidized housing vouchers, our goal should be to help move as many people as possible into recovery and stability, and then toward self-sufficiency with supported long-term sobriety.**

To that end, the two most important tools to end homelessness are: 1) the promotion and funding of trauma-informed mental and behavioral health treatment, integrated and directly tied

to the provision of affordable housing; and 2) the development of truly affordable housing construction through the elimination of local building fees and excessive regulatory requirements.

Citizens in communities around the country are increasingly exasperated by the results of misguided government policies. Polling indicates homelessness is now the number one or number two local issue among voters in twenty of the highest populated cities in America, and homelessness continues to be the top statewide issue in almost all polls in California.²⁴

Congress is encouraged to take the following specific actions as soon as possible to begin to address the national homelessness crisis:

1. **Pass legislation directing HUD to eliminate Housing First as the primary approach to address homelessness.** Housing First prioritization should be eliminated in NOFAs, policies, rule-making, guidance, technical assistance, and in federal communications. Additionally, appropriations should specifically eliminate government funding for any program or regulation that only provides housing vouchers (i.e. has no service participation requirements).
2. **Pass the Housing PLUS Act.** Sponsored by Rep. Andy Barr (KY-6), H.R. 6018, the Housing PLUS Act, would prohibit the HUD Secretary from restricting or limiting Continuum of Care (CoC) funds going to providers that require the provision of supportive services (such as addiction treatment or job counseling) or program participation requirements, or to faith-based organizations. By requiring that no less than 30% of CoC funding be used by recipients that provide or offer access to wraparound services, the bill will provide much needed flexibility to allow local communities to customize their efforts to individual needs. However, the 30% provision within H.R. 6018 should be amended to no less than 40%.
3. **Prioritize economic “self-sufficiency” as the primary measurement of effectiveness of all federal homelessness assistance programs.** In order to receive federal funding, all tribal, state, regional, and local governments, as well as CoCs should also prioritize “self-sufficiency” as the number one measurement of homelessness assistance program effectiveness.
4. **Prioritize trauma-informed wraparound services.** The CoC program should require a minimum of 40% of all federal homelessness assistance funding to be used for direct trauma-informed wraparound services, such as mental illness clinical services and treatment, substance use disorder treatment, job training, and job retention (i.e. funding for housing vouchers should be limited to 60% of funding across all homelessness assistance programs).
5. **Require program participation in all federally funded homelessness assistance programs.** To receive federal housing support, participants should be required to participate in self-sufficiency, health, life skills, behavioral health services and treatment plans, similar to what is done for Pell Grants, TANF, and unemployment insurance benefits.
6. **Restore funding for emergency programs.** As phase one in the Continuum of Care, 25% to 33% of all federal homelessness assistance funding should be allocated to emergency services. The other 67% to 75% of the funding would go to the second and third phases of the CoC, for transitional housing and longer-term housing, respectively. Additionally, rules and regulations that impede faith-based organizations, and other non-profits, from helping people experiencing homelessness should be eliminated.
7. **Replace the Continuum of Care (CoC) funding system with a state block grant system. If moving to a state block grant system is not feasible, then reform the existing CoC governance model.** State block grants, built on the premise that states have a better understanding of local conditions than the federal government, provide a more efficient means of funding CoCs. If a state block program is not feasible, then Congress should reform the governance structures of Continuums of Care by restricting any type of CoC membership of agencies that receive CoC funds (e.g. stop self-dealing conflicts of interest). Additionally, CoC board membership should be expanded to include state and local elected officials, as well as general public stakeholders, to increase accountability.
8. **Eliminate the Institutions for Mental Diseases Exclusion (“IMD Exclusion”) in Medicaid** to increase federal reimbursements for inpatient mental illness treatment. Due to the IMD Exclusion, many mentally ill people do not receive treatment, or are prematurely terminated from treatment. Consequently, they land up on the streets or in jail or prisons. Follow-up clinical services should also be reimbursed in order to allow discharged hospital patients to receive ongoing treatment to continue to improve and get well.
9. **Review the budget of the National Institute of Mental Health** to ensure its priorities reflect the actual problems of neglect seen in the day-to-day care of the mentally ill, especially those who are homeless.
10. **Incentivize local governments to eliminate local building fees for affordable housing construction.** Local governments should be incentivized to streamline building codes and eliminate unnecessary regulations that unnecessarily inflate the cost of housing.

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Glossary

Affordable Housing – Taxpayer-subsidized housing for people at or below a region’s median income. According to HUD, affordable housing is intended for people paying no more than thirty percent of their gross income for housing costs, including utilities.

American Rescue Plan – An Act of Congress, passed in 2021, which provided \$1.9 trillion in economic stimulus. The American Rescue Plan provided \$4 billion in direct support to state and local programs for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, as well as \$51.6 million in indirect homelessness assistance.

Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) – An annual report requiring HUD to provide to Congress nationwide counts of homelessness compiled from regional Point-in-Time Counts, Housing Inventory, and HMIS data reporting from CoCs. The number of people experiencing homelessness is reported in five major categories based on type of housing: Unsheltered, Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, Rapid Rehousing, and Permanent Supportive Housing.

Barriers to Housing – Barriers are challenges that act to prevent individuals and families from getting and maintaining housing. Examples of barriers are lack of income, unemployment, criminal convictions, lack of identification, mental illness, and substance use disorders.

Behavioral Health – Refers to how behaviors impact an individual’s well-being, distinct from mental illnesses. Substance use disorders, alcoholism, and gambling fall under the general umbrella of behavioral health.

CARES Act – Congressional legislation (The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act of 2020, and the Coronavirus Responses and Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021), which

provided economic assistance to individuals, families, businesses, and tribal, state, and local governments impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Both Acts provided expedited funding and regulatory changes to governments to address the impacts of the COVID-19 virus, including homelessness.

Case Management – A service provided by homelessness assistance providers that coordinates overall treatment for people experiencing homelessness.

Continuum of Care (CoC) – A CoC is a self-appointed regional or local planning body, organized to fulfill the responsibilities prescribed in the CoC Program Interim Rule for a defined geographic area, that coordinates housing and services funding for families and individuals experiencing homelessness. CoCs determine local funding allocations, with many of the member agencies receiving federal funds themselves.

Chronic Homelessness – The state of experiencing homelessness – living in a place not meant for human habitation – for at least twelve months or four separate occasions in the last three years and eligible for Social Security disability payments due to a disability.

Disability – The physical, intellectual, and developmental inability to do any substantial gainful activity, which can be expected to result in death, or which has lasted for a continuous period of twelve months or more. Chronic homelessness and a diagnosis of substance use disorder are considered disabilities and qualify people experiencing homelessness for Social Security Disability Income.

Encampments – Locations where two or more people experiencing homelessness live in an

unsheltered area. Encampments are typically made up of tents and improvised structures and can be in either urban or rural settings.

Emergency Shelter – A facility that provides temporary shelter for people experiencing homelessness.

Housing Unit – A house, apartment, group of rooms, or single room occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters.

Housing First – An approach that centers on solving homelessness by providing taxpayer funded housing vouchers free of charge to people experiencing homelessness. Per HUD and the Housing First philosophy, participation in treatment services are not allowed to be mandatory.

Housing Management Information System (HMIS) – HMIS is a local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness and persons at risk of homelessness. Each Continuum of Care (CoC) is responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that complies with HUD’s data collection, management, and reporting standards.

HUD – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is the lead funding agency on most federal programs to address homelessness.

Intensive Case Management – A program for people with severe and persistent mental health issues that severely impact their ability to meet basic needs, maintain medication compliance, managing symptoms, attending and scheduling appointments, life skill classes, employment training, and connecting to specialized services.

McKinney-Vento Act – The federal law that provides regulations and funding of many homelessness assistance programs. The Act originally created fifteen programs providing a spectrum of services to people experiencing homelessness, including Supportive Housing Program, Shelter Plus Care

Program, and Emergency Shelter Grant Program. It also established the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. Later, the HEARTH Act of 2009 consolidated many of these programs, established the federal definition of chronic homelessness, and authorized the Continuum of Care Program as the means to distribute federal grants to communities for homelessness assistance.

Mental Health / Mental Illness – Mental illness refers to “conditions that affect a person’s thinking, feeling, mood, or behavior.” These can include but are not limited to depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia. Mental health reflects “our emotional, psychological, and social well-being.”

Notice of Funding Availability / Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFA/NOFO) – The public notice by the federal government of grants and other funding available to address specific needs or issues. NOFAs / NOFOs define what eligible activities qualify for funding, how to apply for funds, and what specific information should be included in proposals to describe projects and justify funding awards.

Outcomes vs. Outputs – Outcomes are the desired end-game goals to be accomplished (e.g. how many people exit homelessness). Outputs are sub-step actions that contribute towards accomplishing outcomes (e.g. how many hygiene kits are given out).

Outreach Services – Services that attempt to engage and persuade people experiencing homelessness to go into a trauma-informed treatment program or to accept housing.

Overhead Construction Costs – Overhead construction costs include cost of permitting fees, utility hook-ups, and germane and non-germane building codes, as well as the impact of regulations such as parking ratios, environmental reviews, and financing. California has some of the highest building fees and regulatory costs due to laws like the California Environmental Quality Act

(CEQA). In California, it is common to have more than \$100,000 overhead construction costs per housing unit.

Participation Requirements – See Service Participation Requirements below.

Permanent Supportive Housing – Leased-based taxpayer subsidized housing for people experiencing homelessness. Per HUD, participation treatment requirements and services are not allowed to be mandatory.

Point-in-Time Count (PITC) – The Point-in-Time Count is a count of people experiencing homelessness (both unsheltered and sheltered) on a single night in January. A PITC is required by HUD for communities that receive federal homelessness assistance funds and is one of the responsibilities of the local Continuum of Care.

Preconditions – Preconditions, distinct from service participation requirements, are pre-qualifying conditions for individuals to participate in a program based on screening requirements. Preconditions and screening requirements could include sobriety, absence of a serious mental illness, or ability to work.

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) – An intervention that provides short-term (up to three months) and medium-term (4-24 months) tenant-based rental assistance and supportive services to households experiencing homelessness. The practice of quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into taxpayer subsidized lease-based housing for a maximum of 24 months. Per HUD and the Housing First philosophy, participation treatment requirements and services are not allowed to be mandatory.

Services – A wide array of assistance activities provided by service agencies for people experiencing homelessness. Services include, but are not limited to, trauma-informed care, case management, job skills training, life skill classes,

laundry, hygiene care, substance use disorder treatment, treatment for mental illness, dental care, and health care.

Service Participation Requirements – As with Pell Grant and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), these are required activities persons must participate in to continue in a program and receive taxpayer funded assistance. Activities can include attending meetings with case managers or job training and life skill classes, and participation in substance use disorder treatment. Per HUD and the Housing First philosophy, participation treatment requirements and services are not allowed to be mandatory.

Serious Mental Illness (SMI) – A mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder resulting in serious functional impairment, which substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities of daily living.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) – Clinically significant impairment, including health problems, disability, and failure to accomplish responsibilities at work, school, or home caused by the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs.

Transitional Housing (TH) – Transitional Housing provides temporary housing with supportive services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness, with the goal of interim stability and longer-term goal of successfully moving into permanent housing. Transitional Housing programs cover the costs for both housing and accompanying supportive services for program participants for up to 24 months.

Trauma Informed Care – A customized approach of care that addresses an individual's underlying history of trauma.

Wrap Around Services / Robust Services – A wraparound approach customizes treatment services based on the individual needs of people experiencing homelessness.

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How Congress Can Reform
Government's Misguided
Homelessness Policies

