

Federal Panel & Discussion: FEMA, USACE, USICH

NAFSMA Session
April 29, 2021



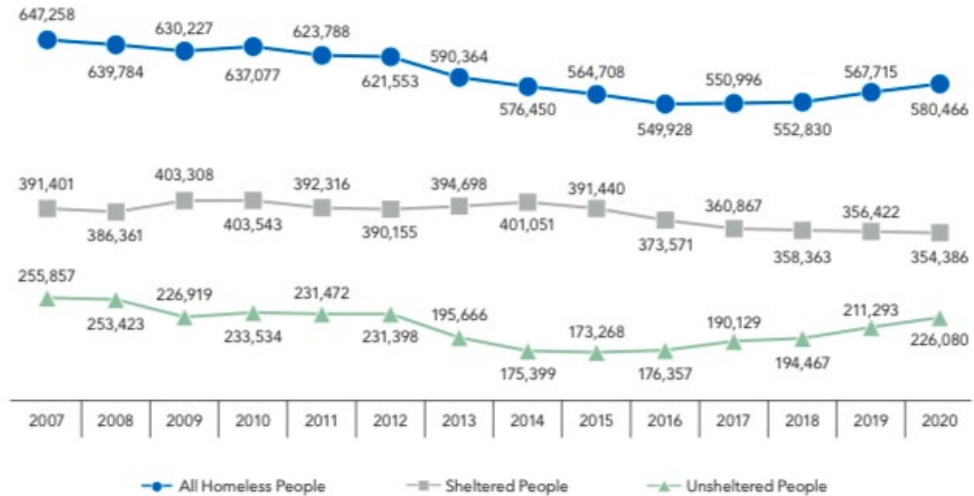
Helene Schneider, Regional Coordinator



The National 2020 Snapshot

- On a single night in January 2020, approximately 580,466 people were experiencing homelessness in the United States.

EXHIBIT 1.1: PIT Estimates of People Experiencing Homelessness
By Sheltered Status, 2007–2020



The U.S. Department of
Housing and Urban Development
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress



PART 1: POINT-IN-TIME ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS

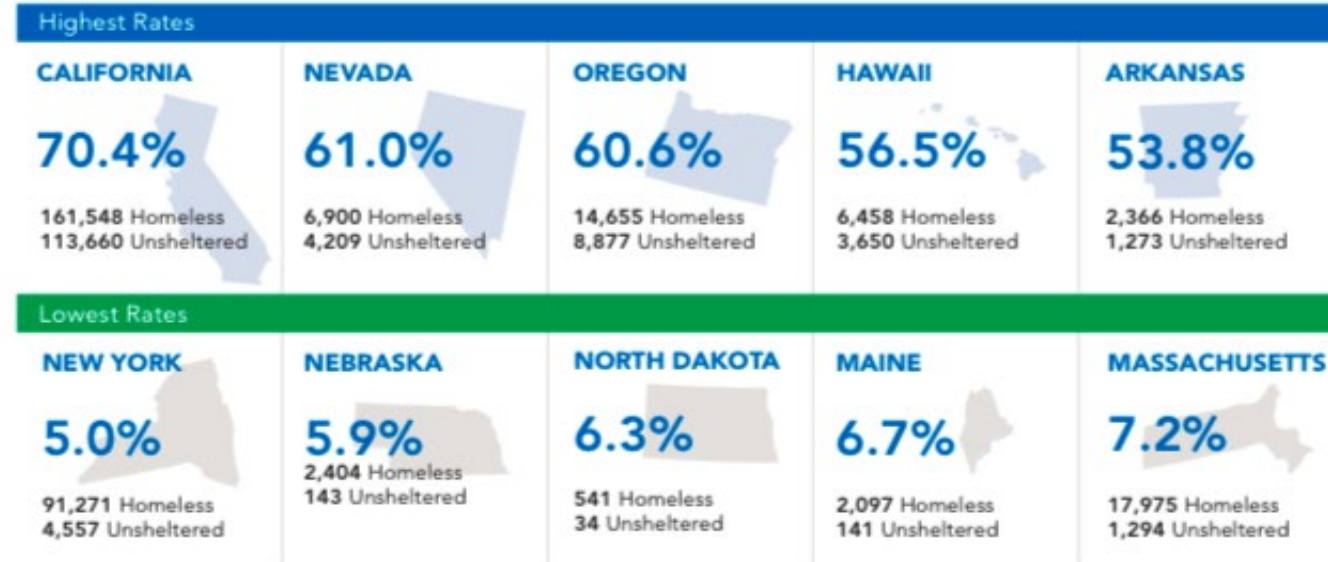
JANUARY 2021



The National 2020 Snapshot: Unsheltered homelessness

The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress: Part 1

EXHIBIT 1.7: States with the Highest and Lowest Percentages of People Experiencing Homelessness who were Unsheltered
2020





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Statutory Authority and Mission

- Originally authorized by Title II of the **Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (PL 100-77)** to serve as an independent establishment within the executive branch
- Most recently reauthorized by the **Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act** of 2009



Coordinating the Federal Response

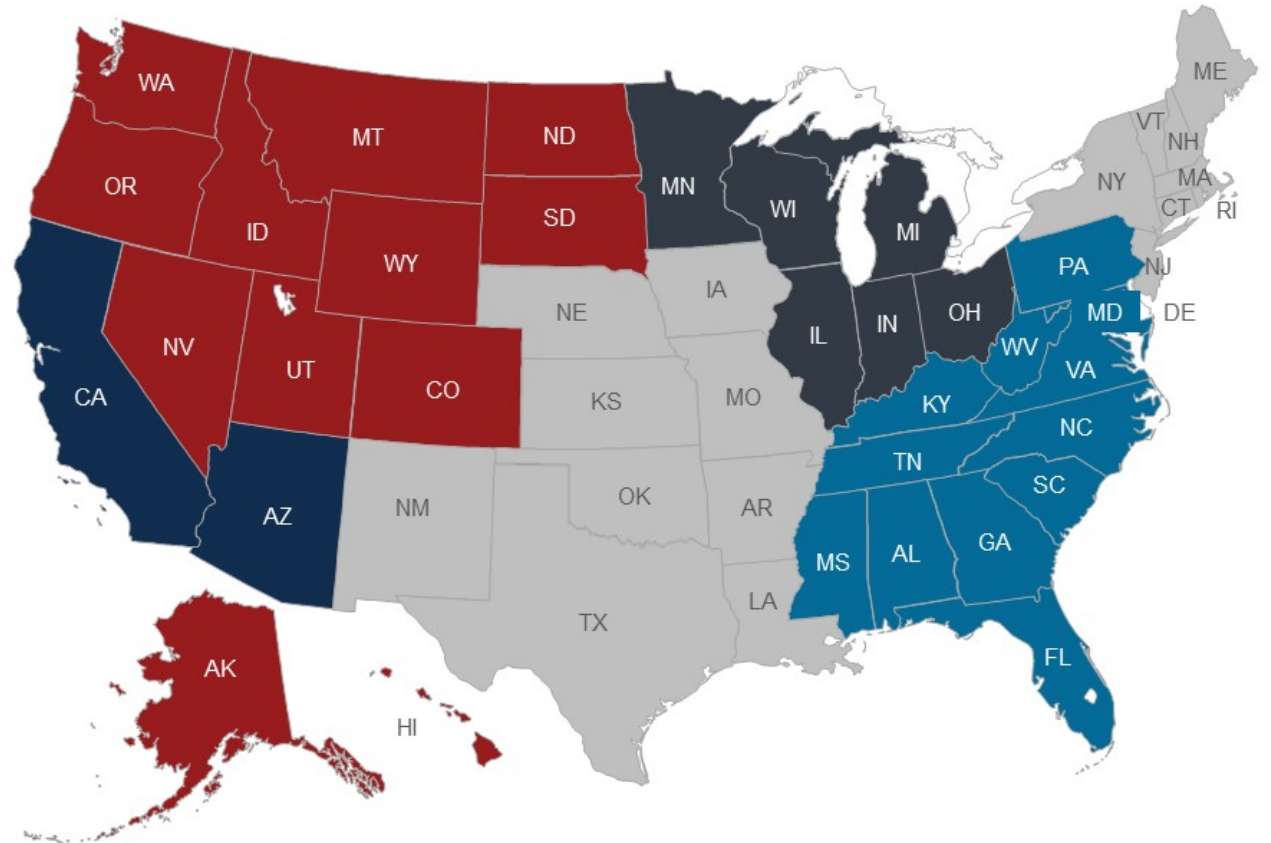
- The Council
- Interagency Working Groups
- Performance measurement and accountability





Creating a National Partnership

- Regional and State Interagency Councils
- Governors, Mayors, County Elected Leaders
- Faith-based and Nonprofit Organizations
- Private Sector
- Philanthropy





What is Meant by “Ending Homelessness”

Operational definition:

Comprehensive response that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible, or if it can't be prevented, it is a **rare, brief, and one-time experience.**

Criteria and benchmarks:

Essential **elements of comprehensive systems** and the **outcomes those systems must be able to achieve.**

**Rare,
Brief &
One-Time**



Impact of COVID-19 on People Experiencing Homelessness

- Primary goals were to save lives and make sure that the emergency medical system was not overwhelmed.
- There was not as high a rate of COVID-19 cases among people experiencing homelessness as originally feared.
 - Immediate strong response to limit exposure
 - Extensive outreach & funding towards non-congregate shelter



Key Observations and Lessons Learned

Communities have been able to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and its impacts on people experiencing homelessness by:

- Rapid implementation of CDC protocols for de-intensifying shelters, increased access to non-congregate shelter opportunities, access to hygiene supplies and cleaning, providing Isolation and Quarantine, testing, and encampment response
 - **On Encampments: Not clearing camps ≠ not engaging people in camps**
- Working across health and homelessness systems to leverage expertise, resources, and eliminate communication barriers for fast decisions



Key Observations and Lessons Learned

Some impacts

- Number, size and locations of encampments grew in some areas
- Significant staff fatigue and burn-out
- Opportunities to leverage and integrate federal, state and local funding
 - Bringing together non-traditional partners to work together and infuse new and existing resources into local prevention and rehousing systems
 - **Major Example: FEMA Reimbursement towards Non-Congregate Shelter**



Shifting from Crisis Response to Long-Term Planning

“If it is unacceptable for people to remain homeless during COVID, how can we go back to it being acceptable afterwards?”

- Terra Linzner, City of Detroit &
Tasha Gray, Homeless Action Network of Detroit (HAND)
USICH Webinar 7/27/2020



Shifting from Crisis Response to Long-Term Planning

- Relieve staff fatigue and capacity/staffing challenges
- Identify and provide safety to those most vulnerable
- Minimize movement of unsheltered populations
- Help people move from congregate/non-congregate shelter to permanent housing
- Continue strong contact with those in permanent housing so that they can maintain stability



Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG-CV) Resources for Homelessness Prevention & Eviction Prevention

- **\$4 billion Emergency Solutions Grant** to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) among individuals and families who are homeless or receiving homeless assistance.
- Round 1: \$1 billion allocated through HUD 2020 formula.
- Round 2: \$3.96 billion allocated through a new COVID-19 related formula.

[https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/CPD/documents/Flexibilities Waivers Guidance for CARE Act CPD Funds 062320.pdf](https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/CPD/documents/Flexibilities_Waivers_Guidance_for_CARE_Act_CPD_Funds_062320.pdf)



ESG-CV: Eligible Activities

- Emergency non-congregate shelter
- Emergency congregate shelter
- Street outreach and client engagement
- Homelessness prevention: financial assistance and rental assistance
- Basic services: housing search and placement, tenant legal services, credit repair, housing stability case management, landlord/tenant mediation
- Rapid rehousing



American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

- **\$1.9 Trillion Relief bill passed on March 16, 2021**
 - \$5B specifically to reduce homelessness
 - Development of Affordable Housing
 - Tenant-Based Rental Assistance
 - Supportive Services
 - Acquisition & Development of Non-Congregate Shelter Units
 - \$21.5B replenish the emergency rental assistance fund
 - \$5B emergency housing vouchers
 - Child Tax Credits
 - \$1B Support through TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
 - \$350B to state and local governments

Challenges with Encampments and Unsheltered Homelessness



May 2018

Caution is Needed When Considering “Sanctioned Encampments” or “Safe Zones”

In their 2017 Point-in-Time counts, some communities reported significant increases in the number of people experiencing homelessness. These increases were driven primarily by increases in the number of individuals (people in households without children) who are unsheltered—living and sleeping outside, in tents, in parks, in cars or RVs, in encampments, or in other places not meant for human habitation. These increases were seen largely in communities facing significant challenges within their rental markets—rapidly increasing rents, competition for units, and a limited supply of housing that people can afford.

Addressing the needs of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness is an issue that often generates contentious, emotional debates across communities. It requires urgent action. Understandably, leaders and housing and services providers within such communities want to find ways to address both the immediate safety and living conditions of the people who are unsheltered and the concerns of other community members.

In response, some communities have created, or are considering creating “sanctioned encampments,” “safe zones,” or other similar settings with a goal of helping people stay in a safer and more sanitary environment, without the risk of being arrested or cited. Sometimes these settings feature sheds or other structures, or provide areas for people to stay in their cars or RVs. Others simply provide places for people to sleep in their own tents or on mats. Some communities have created these environments

as a voluntary option for people living in unsafe situations. In other cases, people living outside may be compelled to move to the designated locations through the threat of citation or arrest. Before communities make the decision to create such environments, it is important to weigh the costs and consequences of that action, and the impact on the community’s systemic efforts to end homelessness.

If your community is exploring this step, here are a few cautions we think you should consider and discuss:

- **Creating these environments may make it look and feel like the community is taking action to end homelessness on the surface—but, by themselves, they have little impact on reducing homelessness. Ultimately, access to stable housing that people can afford, with the right level of services to help them succeed, is what ends homelessness. People staying within such settings are still unsheltered, still living**



As we respond to the crisis of unsheltered homelessness, we must not repeat past mistakes of focusing only on where people will be tonight. We must simultaneously be focused on where people can succeed in the long term—and we know that is permanent housing.

Executive Director Matthew Doherty
Housing First Partners Conference
April 10, 2018



Addressing Encampments & Unsheltered Homelessness

- Get good data, establish a benchmark
- Create & enhance partnerships & collaboratives
- Invest in Outreach Services, use a coordinated entry system
- Allow for low barrier emergency shelters
- Focus on Housing-First Models
- Ensure sustainability
- Share best practices



Best Practices: FLOW

- **Funding**: braiding local, state and federal resources
- **Low Barrier Approach**: to shelter and housing opportunities
- **Outreach Services**: keep them consistent and continual
- **Whole Person Care**: health needs, equity, listening to people with lived experience



Coordinating CA State & Federal Resources

- CA Homeless Coordinating & Financing Council “Guide to Strategic Uses of Key State and Federal Funds to Reduce Homelessness During the COVID-19 Pandemic”
https://www.bcsh.ca.gov/hcfc/documents/covid19_strategic_guide.pdf
- CA Department of Social Services “Project Roomkey”
<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/cdss-programs/housing-programs/project-roomkey>
- CA HCD “Project Homekey” <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-funding/active-funding/homekey.shtml>



Ingredients towards Success

- **Political Will**
- **Effective Use of Adequate Resources**
- **Collaborative Approach**
- **“Never Give Up” Attitude**

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