

HOUSING FIRST

NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION
NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS
CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES

A World Without Housing First

January 9, 2022

*Moderated by Ann Oliva, CEO of the
National Alliance to End Homelessness*



Agenda

Welcome & Opening Remarks

- Ann Oliva, NAEH

Guest Speakers

- Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA)
- Senator Susan Collins (R-ME)

A World Without Housing First

- Kelly King Horne, Homeward
- Sam Tsemberis, Pathways Housing First Institute
- Crissy Canganelli, Shelter House

Impact on People Experiencing Homelessness

- Donald Whitehead, Jr., National Coalition for the Homeless

Take Action & Closing Remarks

- Steve Berg, NAEH

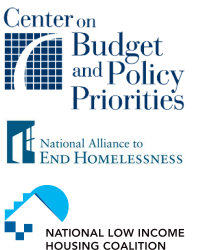
Welcome & Opening Remarks

Ann Oliva

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Guest Speaker

Representative Maxine Waters

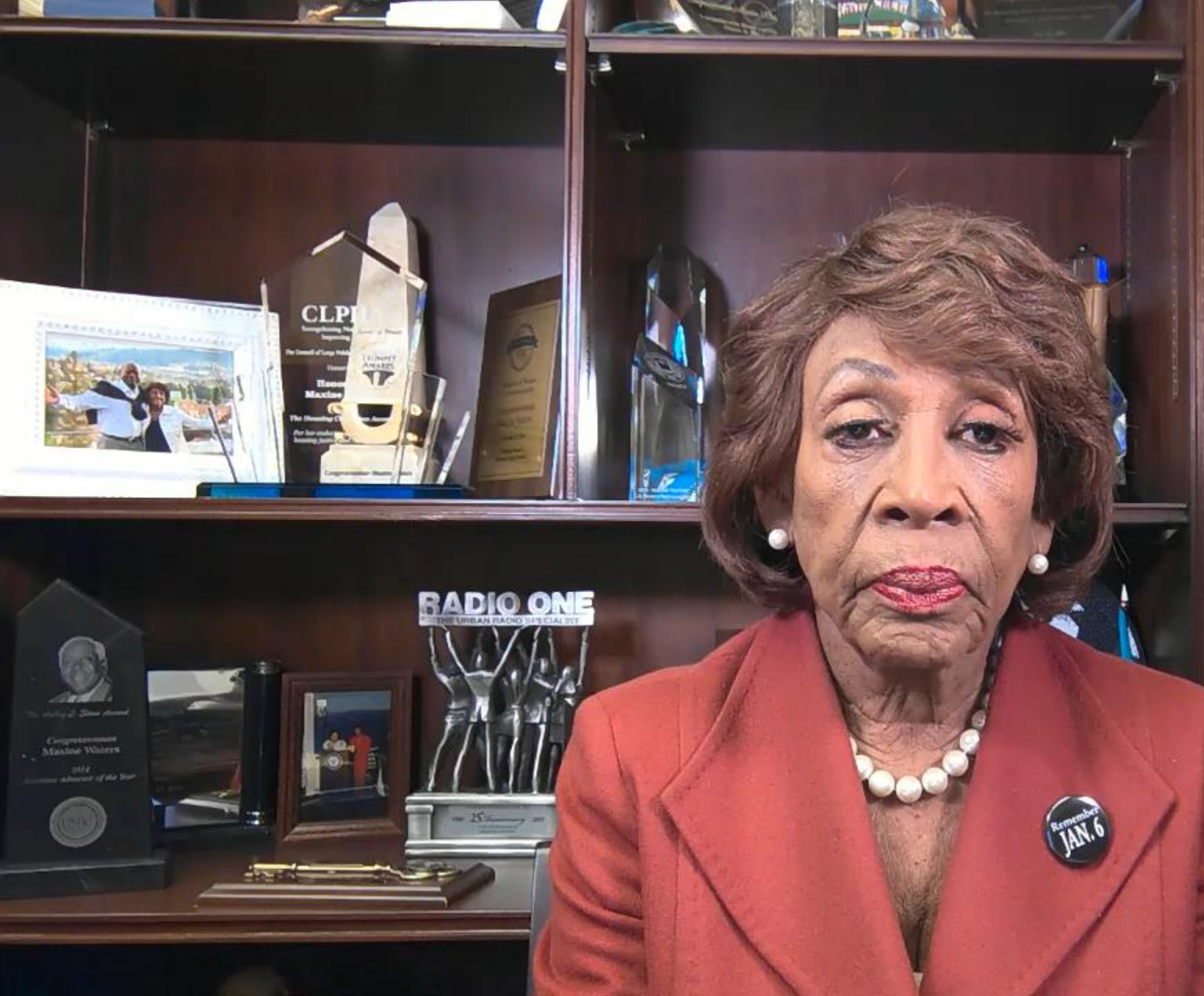
43rd District of California

Incoming Ranking Member

House Financial Services Committee

U.S. House of Representatives





CLP

GIMPEY AWARDS

RADIO ONE
THE URBAN RADIO SPECIALIST

THE Congressional Caucus for Women's
for 20 years of leadership for women & families

Remember
JAN. 6

Guest Speaker

Senator Susan Collins

Maine

Incoming Vice Chair

Appropriations Committee

United States Senate





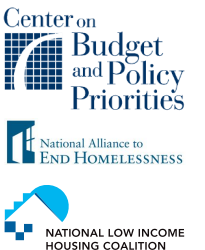
A World Without Housing First

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Before Housing First

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Richmond, Virginia: regional approach to homelessness



Map retrieved from
<http://www.richmondregional.org/>

Greater Richmond Continuum of Care (GRCoC): Established in 1997 by community stakeholders to fight homelessness in the region. Homeward was created in 1998 to support this effort.

Homeward serves as the planning and support agency for the GRCoC and is the Collaborative Applicant, HMIS Lead, and Coordinated Entry System Coordinator.

Our January 2022 PIT was 697. Our per capita rate of homelessness is approximately 6.2.

Learn more: www.endhomelessnessrva.org

Before Housing First: What problem were we trying to solve?

People in a housing crisis



Sleeping outdoors/in tent



Living in car



Evicted/facing eviction




Staying temporarily with family/friends

Shelter programs in the region



In order find assistance, people would visit or call programs hoping to find an empty bed and that they were eligible for that program.



Each shelter had different eligibility requirements based on the programs and services available in that program. People were selected to enter programs based on this match.

Before Housing First: What problems were we trying to solve?

For people with no safe place to go or similar needs

- How do I find a program with an open bed?
- What steps do I need to take to be considered for housing?
- ***How long will I need to wait?***
- ***What do I need to do or agree to do in order to get assistance?***

For providers

- How do we fill our beds and maximize our program offerings?
- What program offerings make the most sense for us? How do we fund these services?
- What do we say to the person in front of us who is clearly in crisis?
- ***When will the people living in unsheltered situations agree to come inside to get assistance?***
- ***How do we serve the people who need our help the most?***

For the community of providers as a whole

- How do we help get people off the streets?
- Are there other services available in the community? What do people tell us they want?
- ***How do we support shelters in saying no to some people so that we can say yes to those who need the assistance the most?***
- ***How do we serve more people and take our responses to homelessness to scale?***
- ***How do we target resources and make better connections to other systems of care?***

What was our community of providers like before we adopted Housing First (2007 – 2009)?

- We had a collegial network of providers who were willing to collaborate but lacked a clear and unifying goal.
- We had compassionate providers offering what they thought would be helpful. These services included workforce programming, children’s services, and parenting classes. Sometimes, these services were available in the community—often by providers with more expertise in these areas.
- People stayed in programs longer— often waiting to save enough money to secure housing. Other people experiencing homelessness had to wait outside or in dangerous situations until space opened up.
- We assumed people who were outside would come inside when they were “ready.”
- We hesitated to make policy or funding decisions that jeopardized program offerings because such decisions seemed subjective. We had supportive funders who started to think about outcomes and impact and wanted to see increased collaboration (especially after the 2008 Housing Crisis.)

Input from people with lived experience and understanding the critical role of shelters

- Conversations with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness during the point-in-time count demonstrated that people would be interested in talking about housing even if they turned down a referral to shelter.
- We needed to move away from shelter referrals being our first and only response to homelessness. Shelters are life-saving interventions for people in crisis (and deserve more funding.) Shelters alone don't end homelessness.
- People were voting with their feet and leaving programs with required services once they were stable.
- Shift from “first come, first served” to serving the most vulnerable who might die without assistance or who would not be able to access resources without assistance.
- Research and input from local stakeholders opened up new ways of thinking about how to connect people to services.
- We realized that people experiencing homelessness were people like us (!) and the difference was housing.
 - i.e. Parenting is hard for everyone. Stable housing makes it easier.

Community clarity and accountability

- We clarified that ending homelessness did not necessarily end poverty. Our more limited goal had a big impact on our community.
- We could identify the community partnerships needed to help people prevent an episode of homelessness or to stay in housing and address other needs.
- Being able to “see the impact” of reducing homelessness among people with long histories of homelessness helped us to engage more partners and funders.
- We have increased community investments in our collaborative efforts to reduce homelessness (even though some programs were cut.)
- Having a shared vision of ending homelessness for a household helped us to make difficult decisions.
- We began to work as a coordinated system and make decisions to meet local needs.
- Our system began to push for other systems to step up in serving people experiencing homelessness. We stopped trying to be all things to a small amount of people.
- We developed compassionate ways to say no so that we could say yes to those most in need because of their lack of stable housing.

Find out more at www.endhomelessnessrva.org



www.homewardva.org
www.endhomelessnessrva.org

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A World Without Housing First

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The World Before Housing First

Sam Tsemberis, PhD

Pathways Housing First Institute

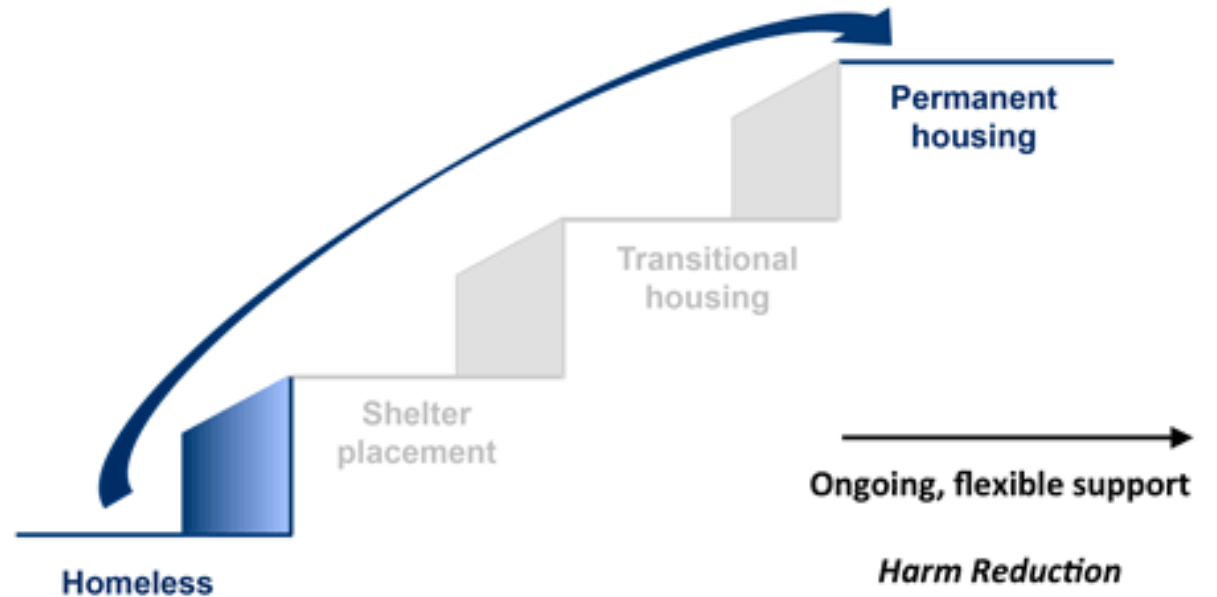
Pathwaystohousing.org

@SamTsemberis



Housing First: 3 Key Components

- 1. Rent subsidies for immediate access to housing
- 2. Support and treatment by community-based service (ICM, ACT - direct or brokered)
- 3. Recovery oriented program philosophy



Housing is offered as a basic human right

Homelessness, USA is a city of 582,462 people who do not have a place to call home
Before Housing First, this city had **no direct exits out homelessness**, especially for people with addiction or mental health problems



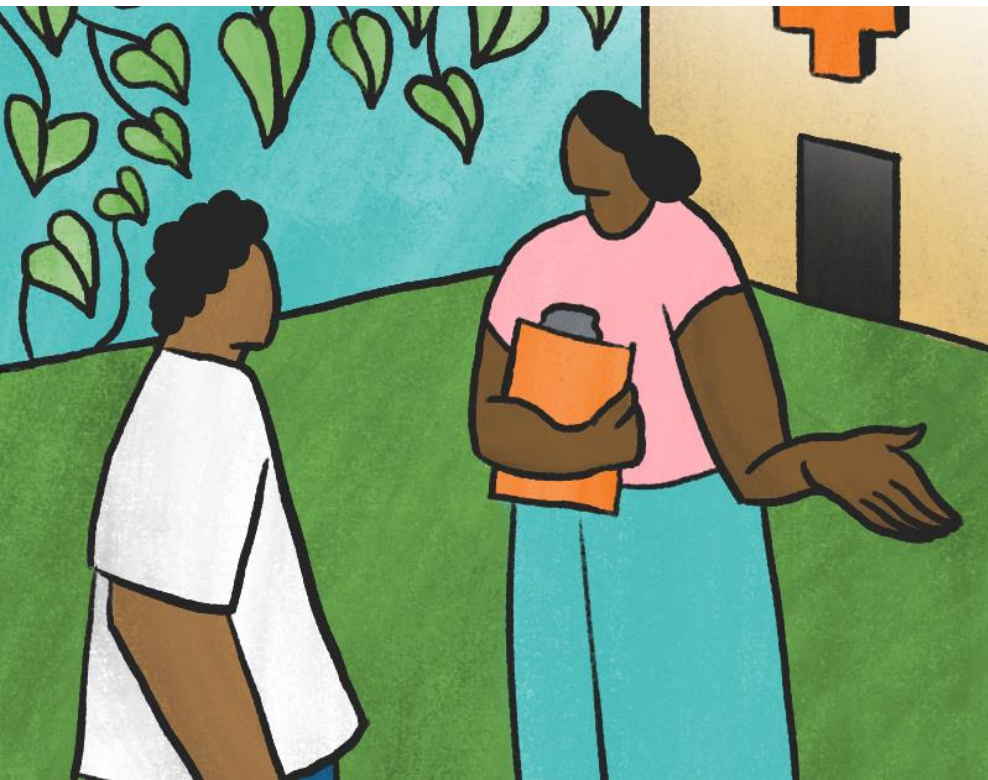


Choice in Housing Choice in Services balancing safety and risk

- Housing choices (wide but restricted by rent affordability)
- Service choice balances safety and risk
 - Dignity of Risk
 - Balance neglect and overprotect
 - Assess and continuously evaluate
 - Use restrictive measures only with imminent risk



Separation and Coordination of Housing and Services: Continuity Through Crises



- Support continuous through residential changes, e.g., eviction/relocation
- Hospitalization
- Incarceration
- **HF essentially operates with a no discharge policy**

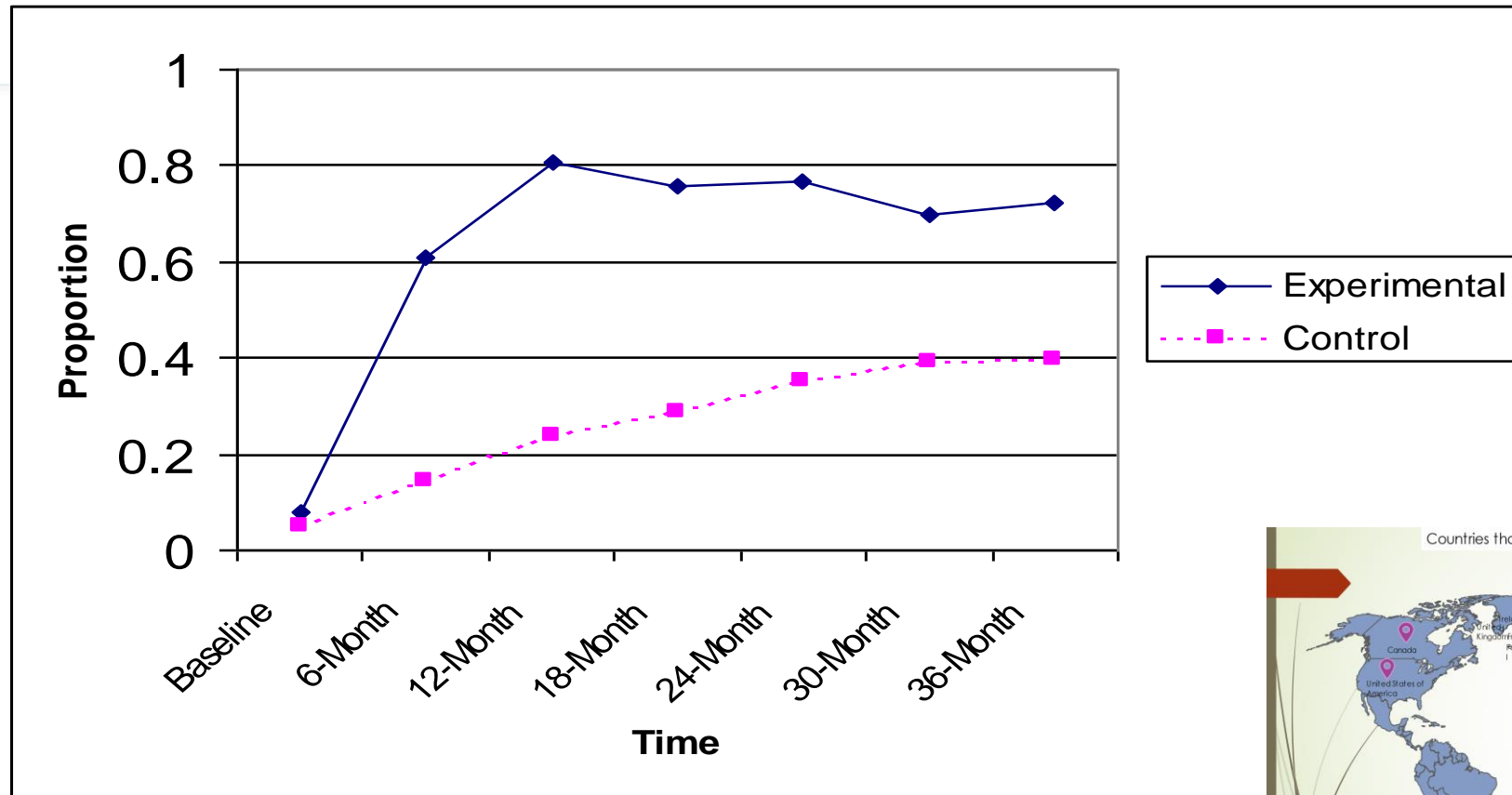
Ongoing Assertive Engagement: Program Takes Responsibility for Client Outcomes

- Program assumes responsibility for continuity of care and for client outcomes
- Person Centered Treatment Plans
- What if the client answer is “no”
- Balance assertive engagement with honoring client choice

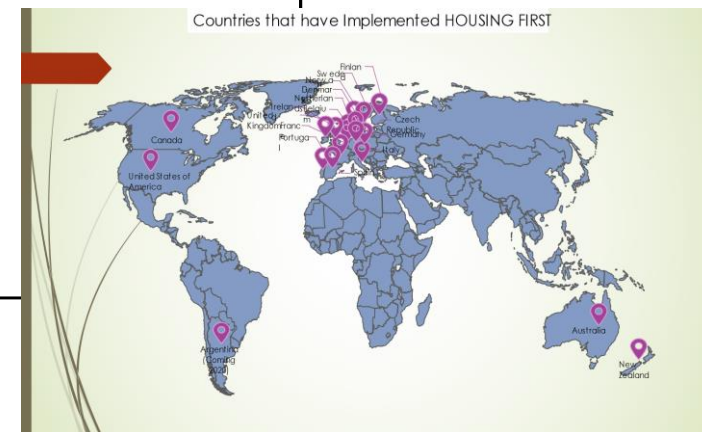


Housing First compared to Traditional Homeless Services

Proportion
of Time Housed



Note. Significant at 6-, 12-, 18-, 24-, 30-, and 36-month.





Questions?

Comments?

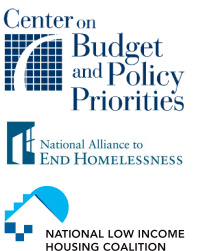
A World Without Housing First

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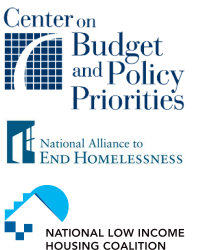
Impact on People Experiencing Homelessness

Donald Whitehead, Jr.

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National Coalition for the Homeless

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National Coalition for the Homeless

The National Coalition for the Homeless is a national network of people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers, and others committed to a single mission:

To end and prevent homelessness while ensuring the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness are met and their civil rights are respected and protected.



BRING AMERICA
HOME NOW

<https://bringamericahomenow.org>



NATIONAL
COALITION
FOR THE
HOMELESS



Impacts

- Sweeps exacerbate health problems and creates new ones
- Creates additional barriers to accessing housing, and employment and extends the length of time people remain unhoused.
- Undermines trust in systems of care and disrupts the engagement of outreach workers; street medicine practitioners and other community partners conducting outreach.



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Impacts

- People experiencing homelessness involved in raids lose valuables. (Identification, personal items, clothing, medical devices including wheelchairs)
- Criminalization forces people into isolation the result may be deadly. Isolated people experiencing homelessness are more susceptible to violence and hate crimes.
- People experiencing homelessness have a shorter life span than housed individuals.



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Messaging

- Housing is a human right outreach.
- Homelessness is solvable
- Homeless is not a choice
- People are forced into homeless
- Housing first works
- We must address structural issues to end homelessness including
- Structural Racism;
- Poverty
- Lack of Mental Health resources
- criminalization



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<https://bringameriahomenow.org>



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Closing

We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history there is such a thing as being too late. Procrastination is still the thief of time

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



BRING AMERICA
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<https://bringamericahomenow.org>



NATIONAL
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HOMELESS

Take Action & Closing Remarks

Steve Berg

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National Alliance to End Homelessness

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Take Action

Educate your Congressional delegation

- Get to know key staff (and Members)
- Invite to site visits or local events
- Teach them about what works
- Key federal issues: funding, supporting what works, reject harmful measures
- Republicans and Democrats

Take Action

Build local alliances

- Mayors
- Hospitals/health care
- Landlords
- Anyone who would like to see less homelessness!

Take Action

Sign on to statement of values opposing criminalization

[Statement of Values \(wufoo.com\)](http://wufoo.com)

Review

- This is the way to deal with homelessness most effectively
- Why Housing First is the right way to go
- Why the arguments against it are invalid
- We've tried other things, this is better!

Take Action!



Use NLIHC's [Advocacy Toolkit](#) to:

1. **Schedule meetings with elected officials.** Use our [meeting request template](#) and [tips for planning](#) in-district meetings.
2. **Invite elected officials to tour an affordable housing development, or a Housing First program.** Read more about [how to plan](#) an effective site visit or tour.
3. **Amplify on social media key messages about America's housing and homelessness crisis and long-term solutions.** Use our sample [social media messages](#).
4. **Share stories of those directly impacted by homelessness and housing instability.** Learn more about [how to tell compelling stories](#).

Talking Points



- **What are the major causes of America's housing and homelessness crisis?**
- **Why is homelessness increasing in some communities?**
- **What is Housing First?**
- **Why are some elected officials turning to misguided and harmful measures?**
- **What are the long-term solutions needed to end America's homelessness and housing crisis?**

Housing First Resources



- [State and Congressional District Profiles](#)
- [Factsheets on Housing First](#)
 - Why Housing First is a [critical strategy](#) for ending homelessness.
 - [Research](#) on the effectiveness of Housing First.
 - How Housing First [cut veteran homelessness](#) in half.
 - How Housing First [supports recovery](#) from substance use disorders
 - How Housing First supports people with [mental health conditions](#)
 - [Key facts](#) about Housing First
 - [Q&A](#) on Housing First
 - [Responding to Unsheltered Homelessness](#)
- [Talking Points to Oppose the Cicero-Backed Legislation](#)
- [Talking Points to Oppose the Housing PLUS Act](#)

Resources

Next Webinar: “Housing First Promotes Health”

Tuesday, February 21 from 2:30-4:00 pm ET

Register at: <https://bit.ly/3XJFKoe>

Learn more about Housing First: <https://bit.ly/3vHf8YR>

Advocacy Toolkit: <https://bit.ly/3VyOko6>

