Webinar 2: Homelessness is a Housing Problem
August 29, 2022

Moderated by Diane Yentel, President & CEO, National Low Income Housing Coalition
Agenda

Opening Remarks
• Diane Yentel, NLIHC

Homelessness is a Housing Problem
• Gregg Colburn, University of Washington

Housing First Success Story: Houston, TX
• Ana Rausch & Jessica Preheim, Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County

Housing First Success Story: Ending Homelessness for People with Disabilities or Substance Use Issues
• Dora Leong Gallo, A Community of Friends

Emerging Threats
• Sarah Owsley, Empower Missouri

Local Advocacy
• Bonnie Harper, Partners Behavior Health Management
• Michele Knapp, Diakonos/Fifth Street Ministries

Take Action
• Steve Berg, NAEH
Opening Remarks
Diane Yentel
President & CEO
National Low Income Housing Coalition
dyentel@nlihc.org
Homelessness is a Housing Problem

Gregg Colburn
Assistant Professor of Real Estate
University of Washington College of Build Environments

colburn3@uw.edu
Homelessness is a Housing Problem

NLIHC, NAEH, and CBPP’s Webinar Series on Homelessness and Housing First

Gregg Colburn | August 29, 2022
University of Washington
Homelessness is a Housing Problem
How Structural Factors Explain U.S. Patterns

The book
Causes of Homelessness

According to the 2019 Point-in-Time homelessness census in Seattle/King County, survey results suggest the following events or conditions lead to homelessness:

- Job loss: 25%
- Alcohol or drug use: 15%
- Eviction: 10%
- Divorce/separation: 7%
- Inability to pay rent: 6%
- Argument with family/friend: 3%
Causes of Homelessness

Are these conventional explanations of homelessness root causes or precipitating events?
Causes of Homelessness

Ten friends decide to play a game of musical chairs and arrange ten chairs in a circle. A leader begins the game by turning on the music, and everyone begins to walk in a circle inside the chairs. The leader removes one chair, stops the music, and the ten friends scramble to find a spot to sit—leaving one person without a chair. The loser, Mike, was on crutches after spraining his ankle. Given his condition, he was unable to move quickly enough to find a chair during the scramble that ensued.

What caused Mike’s chairlessness?
Causes of Homelessness

- Research demonstrates that drug use, mental illness, and poverty increase the risk of homelessness at the individual level.

- But why do these conditions produce homelessness in some geographic contexts and not others?
Introduction

- Why do rates of homelessness vary so widely throughout the United States? Why, for example, does Seattle have between four and five times the per capita homelessness of Chicago?

- Does Seattle have a large homelessness problem because it has more people with these individual vulnerabilities?
Introduction

- This is a book about cities, not about people.
- Understanding who becomes homeless is an important question, but it doesn’t help us understand regional variation.
- Our thesis: **Tight housing markets accentuate vulnerabilities.**
- Individual vulnerabilities serve as a sorting mechanism in tight housing markets.
Rates of Homelessness
Per capita rates of homelessness in select U.S. regions, 2019

Dashed lines indicate city and county averages of per capita PIT counts

Cities
- New York, New York
- Washington, District of Columbia
- San Francisco, California
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Atlanta, Georgia
- Baltimore, Maryland
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- St. Louis, Missouri
- Detroit, Michigan
- Chicago, Illinois
- Indianapolis, Indiana

Counties
- Los Angeles County, California
- Santa Clara County, California
- King County, Washington
- Multnomah County, Oregon
- Sacramento County, California
- Hennepin County, Minnesota
- Clark County, Nevada
- San Diego County, California
- Travis County, Texas
- Dallas County, Texas
- Mecklenburg County, North Carolina
- Maricopa County, Arizona
- Franklin County, Ohio
- Bexar County, Texas
- Hamilton County, Ohio
- Cuyahoga County, Ohio
- Miami-Dade County, Florida
- Cook County, Illinois
- Hillsborough County, Florida

Homelessness per 1,000 people
Potential explanations:
The individual
Potential explanations: **The individual**

**Percent with income below poverty level versus PIT count (per capita)**

*Dashed lines indicate a linear regression of per capita PIT counts onto poverty rate between 2007 and 2019 for a sample of U.S. regions.*

- **Cities**
  - $R^2 = 0.14$
- **Counties**
  - $R^2 = 0.17$

*Bands indicate 95% confidence intervals for the slope of the regression line.*
Potential explanations: The individual

Rate of serious mental illness versus PIT count (per capita)

Dashed lines indicate a linear regression of per capita PIT counts onto rates of serious mental illness in U.S. states between 2007 and 2019.

Rate of serious mental illness

Rate of homelessness per 1,000 people

Bands indicate 95% confidence intervals for the slope of the regression line.
Potential explanations: The individual

**Rate of substance use disorder versus PIT count (per capita)**

Dashed lines indicate a linear regression of per capita PIT counts onto rates of substance use disorder in U.S. states between 2007 and 2019.

Rate of substance use disorder

Rate of homelessness per 1,000 people

$R^2 = 0.06$

Bands indicate 95% confidence intervals for the slope of the regression line.
Potential explanations: Local context
Potential explanations: Local context

January average temperature versus indexed homelessness
Dashed lines indicate a linear regression of indexed rates of homelessness onto average January temperatures between 2007 and 2019 for a sample of U.S. regions.

Average January temperature, degrees Fahrenheit

Indexed per capita homelessness

Indexed rates of homelessness refer to a normalized measure of per capita rates, whereby each region-year pair is scaled with respect to the maximum rate across all cities or counties (over all years). Bands indicate 95% confidence intervals for the slope of the regression line.
Potential explanations: **Local context**

**Benefit/rent ratio versus family PIT count (per capita)**

_Dashed lines indicate a linear regression of family per capita PIT counts onto benefit/rent ratios in U.S. states between 2007 and 2019._

_MAXIMUM WELFARE BENEFIT DIVIDED BY MEDIAN TWO-BEDROOM RENT_

**Rate of homelessness per 1,000 people**

- **Rate:** 2.5, 2.0, 1.5, 1.0, 0.5, 0.0
- **Percentage:** 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, 100%, 110%, 120%, 130%, 140%

*R^2 = 0.01*

_Bands indicate 95% confidence intervals for the slope of the regression line._
Potential explanations: Local context

Low-income migration rate versus PIT count (per capita)

Dashed lines indicate a linear regression of per capita PIT counts onto the low-income migration rate between 2007 and 2019 for a sample of U.S. regions.

Bands indicate 95% confidence intervals for the slope of the regression line.
Potential explanations: Local context

- Observers frequently blame left-leaning local politicians for conditions that encourage or tolerate homelessness. Our sample cities were governed by Democrats 85% of the time (Republicans 8%, Independents 7%).

- If Democrats are to blame, why don’t Chicago and Cleveland (Democratic strongholds) have a big problem with homelessness?
Potential explanations:

Housing market
Potential explanations: Housing market

Median contract rent versus PIT count (per capita)

Dashed lines indicate a linear regression of per capita PIT counts onto median contract rent between 2007 and 2019 for a sample of U.S. regions.

Median contract rent in 2019 dollars

Cities

Counties

Rate of homelessness per 1,000 people

$500 $1,000 $1,500 $2,000 $500 $1,000 $1,500 $2,000

$R^2 = 0.55$

$R^2 = 0.24$

Bands indicate 95% confidence intervals for the slope of the regression line.
Potential explanations: Housing market

Rental vacancy rate versus PIT count (per capita)

Dashed lines indicate a linear regression of per capita PIT counts onto the natural log of rental vacancy rate between 2007 and 2019 for a sample of U.S. regions.

- Cities: $R^2 = 0.27$
- Counties: $R^2 = 0.28$

Bands indicate 95% confidence intervals for the slope of the regression line.
Typology

- **Housing supply elasticity** measures the change in the supply of housing to a change in price. Supply elasticity is driven by regulations and topography.

- Price elasticity of supply: \[
\frac{\% \Delta \text{ in quantity supplied}}{\% \Delta \text{ in price}}
\]
Population growth versus housing supply elasticity

Dots indicate U.S. cities; parentheses indicate 2010–2019 rental vacancy rates.

Supply elasticity estimates follow Saiz (2010). Figure forthcoming in Colburn & Alden (2022).
Conclusion

Regions need two types of investments:

1) **Operating investments** to fund housing support, maintenance, and services, and
2) **Capital investments** to construct housing

And where housing is difficult to construct, changes to regulations and land use policy are needed
Conclusion

- Continuing to diagnose homelessness as a problem of the individual will undermine efforts to prevent and end it.
- The country requires a structural understanding of and structural responses to homelessness.
- Bright spot: the dramatic fall in veteran homelessness in the United States over the last decade.
Thank you!

https://homelessnesshousingproblem.com

colburn3@uw.edu
@ColburnGregg

Gregg Colburn
Runstad Department of Real Estate
University of Washington
Housing First Success Story: Houston, Texas

Ana Rausch
Vice President of Program Operations
Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County
arausch@homelesshouston.org

Jessica Preheim
Vice President of Strategic Planning & Public Affairs
Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County
jpreheim@homelesshouston.org
The Way Home
Continuum of Care
My, how big you are!!

TX-700 CoC = 3,739 sq miles

HOUSTON DEMOGRAPHICS
City of Houston - 644 sq. miles
Population - 2,145,000
Population Density - 3,372 per sq. mile
ETJ (excluding city limits) - 1172 sq. miles
Transit - 7.5 miles

MAP NOTES
- The cities represented within Houston's city limits have approximately 373 cumulative miles of transit.
- The cities represented within Houston's ETJ have approximately 262 cumulative miles of transit.
- The cities represented within Houston's ETJ have approximately 1161 cumulative sq. miles of area

LAND AREA COMPARISON: HOUSTON AND OTHER U.S. TRANSIT CITIES

www.knudsonlp.com

Houstonia Feb 2016
Permanent housing is the solution

100+ partners working together to end homelessness

AKA: TX-700 Continuum of Care

Coordinate the community response to homelessness

Lead agency for the TX-700 Continuum of Care

Non-Profit Organization
Reality in 2011

- We had the 6th largest homeless population in the country
- Homeless service providers were spending millions but still leaving federal funds unused
- Homeless service providers were operating in silos, with no collaboration
- Recidivism was high
- Homelessness is expensive
The Shift

• Two important events in 2012
  ➢ Technical Assistance
    ✓ Houston was identified as a priority community by HUD
  ➢ Community Charette
    ✓ Brought everyone together
    ✓ Identified common goals for the homeless response system
Evolution to a Coordinated System

✓ Remove barriers that keep people from getting what they need
✓ Coordinate & simplify access
✓ Match resources with needs
✓ Enhance collaboration among funders & partners
✓ Build capacity
✓ Use data to drive decision-making & promote quality
Final Governance & Implementation

The Continuum of Care Steering Committee
(Primary Decision-Making Body)

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION BODIES

**SYSTEM**
- Standing Committees
- HMIS Support
- CoC Grant Performance
- Coordinated Access
- Provider Input
- Consumer Input

**CHRONICS**
- Oversight
- Mayor's Leadership Team
- Work Groups
- Pipeline
- Integrated Care PSH

**VETERANS**
- Oversight
- Housing
- Houston's Heroes
- Work Groups
- Outreach Data
- SSVF/Retention

**FAMILIES**
- Oversight
- RRH Funders
- Work Groups
- RRH Providers
- SSVF
- Domestic Violence

**YOUTH**
- Oversight
- Homeless Youth Network
- Work Groups
- Once Voice
- Housing Policy
- LGBTQ
Hurricane Harvey – August 2017

• Source: Houston Chronicle
After Harvey Effects

More than 19 trillion gallons of rainwater fell on parts of Texas, causing widespread, catastrophic flooding.

Nearly 80,000 homes had at least 18 inches of floodwater, 23,000 of those with more than 5 feet.

The Houston area experienced the largest amount of rainwater ever recorded in the continental United States from a single storm (51.88 inches).

24 hospitals were evacuated, 61 communities lost drinking water, 23 ports were closed, 781 roads impassable.

Nearly 780,000 Texans evacuated their homes, more than 42,000 housed temporarily in 692 shelters.

Local, state and federal first responders rescued 122,331 people and 5,234 pets.

Houston Housing Authority estimated 1000 affordable housing units destroyed.
Since 2012, more than 21,000+ individuals experiencing homelessness had been permanently housed.

Nearly 90% remained housed two-years after placement.

After reducing homelessness by 54%, we saw an 18% increase after Harvey.

Much attention & resources were diverted to respond to the disaster.

Our region’s homeless population became stagnant, due to a lack of financial resources and tools.

Continued support needed to "get over the hump"
The Rise in “Street Issues”

54% Homeless Population

Visibility
2019 New Strategic Plan - Need

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<th>Current System (Units)</th>
<th>Demand</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<td>2,075</td>
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<td>PSH for Families</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>+31</td>
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COVID-19
• On July 1, Harris County, Houston, & the Coalition announced $65M plan to serve 5,000 people by October 2022

• Housing is healthcare
Accelerate the work of The Way Home

- Bridge to Permanent Supportive Housing
- 12-Month Rapid Re-housing
- Diversion
- Auxiliary/ Social Distancing Emergency Shelter
- Mental Health Case Management
- Enhanced Street Outreach
- PSH Housing Preservation
The Way Home System Performance
CCHP Funding People Served Tracker
August 9, 2022

Total Cumulative Housing Placements - Actual
Pace Without CCHP Funding
Landlord Engagement

Act as the primary advocate, or "case manager", for landlords

Simplify program funding streams, payment processes paperwork, and services

Use feedback from landlords to advise system changes in practice and funding

Check-in regularly with LLs to troubleshoot issues & provide updates

Provide education for office staff on vulnerable populations and housing programs

Payment of Landlord Incentive Fees for every unit dedicated to the system
The CCHP allowed for the roll-out of an Encampment Decommissioning program that has demonstrated proven results in placing individuals living on the streets into housing.

- Official Encampment Response Strategy available.
- Currently being used as a national best practice.
- Houston Chronicle cover story featured our efforts.
Encampments Decommissioned - 57

Individuals Engaged, n=343

- Housed, 78%
- Self-Resolved, 12%
- Refused, 10%

Permanent Housing

- RRH, 40%
- PSH, 60%

Avg Days from Referral to Move-In

- Hispanic/Latino: 63 Pre-CCHP, 32 CCHP
- White, NH: 66 Pre-CCHP, 37 CCHP
- Black/AA: 72 Pre-CCHP, 36 CCHP
63% reduction in homelessness since 2011

- Overall Homelessness: 63%
- Chronic Homelessness: 69%
- Family Homelessness: 81%
- Veteran Homelessness: 84%

Functional Zero - 2015
Homeless Count Population Comparison – Major US Cities*

*2020 Homeless Count per 1,000 Residents
Results Suggest Housing-Focused Pandemic Response Kept Numbers Down

- In 2021 alone, partners of TWH placed more than 3,870 people into permanent housing through the CCHP
  - 50% of these were living unsheltered prior to being housed
  - 16% were sheltered
Houston and Harris County announce increased investment in efforts to reduce homelessness by $100 million.

“In Houston, we either go big or we go home. And today, we are going big so…Houstonians can go home!” – Houston Mayor, Sylvester Turner
Community COVID Housing Program

Photos courtesy of The Salvation Army of Greater Houston
25,500+ Housed Since 2011

- BBVA Stadium
- Capacity: 22,039
Jessica Preheim
jpreheim@homelesshouston.org

Ana Rausch, MA
arausch@homelesshouston.org
Housing First Success Story: Ending Homelessness for People with Disabilities Or Substance Use Issues

Dora Leong Gallo
President & CEO
A Community of Friends
dgallo@acof.org
Homelessness and Housing First

Homelessness is a Housing Problem

August 29, 2022
A Community of Friends (ACOF) is a nonprofit affordable housing developer whose mission is to end homelessness through the provision of quality permanent supportive housing for people with mental illness.
- An apartment (*everyone has a lease*)
- For people experiencing homelessness and have a disability, including addiction
- Housing is not time limited (*can live there indefinitely*)
- Rent is affordable (*generally 30% of person’s income*)
- Services are onsite (*are voluntary*)
  - Trauma-informed
  - One-on-one meetings
  - Independent living skills
  - Referral services
A COMMUNITY OF FRIENDS

Our Philosophy

- Housing first
- Recovery is possible
- Homes in communities where people live
- Integration is normalized
- “Whatever it takes”
A COMMUNITY OF FRIENDS
Housing First, a philosophy and a strategy

Philosophy
- A stable and an affordable home is the first thing needed for people experiencing homelessness in order to end homelessness and achieve housing stability

Strategy
- Provide a stable, affordable home, without conditions, with onsite supportive services.
- A flexible model that is adaptable to various types of homes offered to people experiencing homelessness
A COMMUNITY OF FRIENDS  Elements of Housing First in PSH

- Low barrier
- Non-punitive
- Consumer choice and self determination
- Accountability
- Services are available, but voluntary

Housing is the beginning - not the end, and not a reward
- Case management
- Life skills/independent living skills
- Mental health support
- Substance addiction recovery services
- Health and wellness programs
- Family and children services
- Domestic violence support
- Employment services / professional development
- Benefits assistance

- Partnerships with more than two dozen different social services agencies
93% of special needs tenants below 30% of Area Median Income
76% have a diagnosed mental illness
71% are chronically homeless at entry
46% with a diagnosed substance addiction

88% of tenants remain in housing after three years
Dora Leong Gallo
President and Chief Executive Officer
dgallo@acof.org

www.acof.org
Emerging Threats

Sarah Owsley
Policy & Advocacy Director
Empower Missouri
sarah@empowermissouri.org
Local Advocacy

Bonnie Harper
*HUD Grant Housing Specialist*
Partners Behavioral Health Management
bharper@partnersbhm.org

Michele Knapp
*Executive Director*
Diakonos/Fifth Street Ministries
mknapp@fifthstreetministries.com
Not just a site visit. Set up a room for discussion with local “experts.”

An opportunity for those with the most experience from multiple perspectives to . . .

- Share their knowledge, so the congressional member can make informed decisions for the District;
- Elevate the challenges and opportunities to the public;
- Establish a public record of the congressional member’s position(s) through local media;
- Provide the basis for an ongoing conversation that makes you a reliable resource for congressional staff.
Collaboration and Strategic Planning from the Start

- Diakonos dba Fifth Street Ministries (shelter/direct service/housing provider)
- Partners Behavioral Health Management (LME/MCO)
- NC Coalition to End Homelessness (statewide coordination/policy)
Bring in the Voices the Congressional Member will hear

Pictured (from left) are Fifth Street Executive Director Michele Knapp, veteran Mark Sanchez, and Rep. Patrick McHenry.
The whole picture from multiple perspectives

- Statesville Mayor Costi Kutteh
- Senator Victoria Burgess Sawyer, representing the state legislative district that includes Iredell and Yadkin
- Angela Boykin, VP Government Operations, Healthy Blue at Blue Cross NC (Housing as Healthcare and corporate)
- Tim Kincaid, former Fifth Street Ministries resident helped by HUD-funded program
- Brett Eckerman, Executive Director of United Way of Iredell County
- Dr. Nimesh Shah, MD, psychiatry specialist affiliated with Iredell Memorial Hospital
- Ken Carter, Bishop of the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1000+ churches and nearly 300,000 members (including the 45 local churches in the CD that participate/contribute to Fifth Street Ministries/Diakonos)
Combine data from multiple counties to reflect the congressional district.
A marketing partner can elevate your message and leverage its power.
Take Action

Steve Berg
Vice President for Programs and Policy
National Alliance to End Homelessness
sberg@naeh.org
Homelessness: Housing First and Congress

Steve Berg
National Alliance to End Homelessness
Virtual Hill Day
Talk to Congress about homelessness and Housing First

• Wednesday, September 14, 2022
• Focusing on key HUD spending accounts
• Help available to set up virtual meetings
• Interested? E-mail Jerry Jones
  jjones@naeh.org
What else to do

- NLIHC Toolkit
- Longer term agenda: Vouchers, Development, emergency response
- Immediate need: Cosponsors for bills listed in the toolkit
- Next Congress: Strong bipartisan support
What to say to Congress

• Homelessness has bad impacts for everyone
• We know what to do about homelessness (the Housing First approach)
• How it’s working in your community and elsewhere
• Better spending in accounts like Homeless Assistance and Tenant-Based Rental Assistance will take Housing First to scale
Annual spending bills aka Appropriations

- The process is stuck because no agreement on allocations for each agency (Appropriations need 60 votes in Senate)
- There is support for good increases, but not a done deal
- Need a constant drumbeat on more funding and using the funding in the most effective manner
- Final decisions October? December? Spring? but may lock in individual accounts at any time
Homelessness

Steve Berg
National Alliance to End Homelessness
sberg@naeh.org
Twitter @sberg0
Resources

Next Webinar: “Long-Term Solutions and Successful Strategies”
Monday, September 12, at 2:30 pm ET - 4:00 pm ET

Register at: https://bit.ly/3vIbn5o

Read more about Housing First: https://bit.ly/3vHf8YR

Take action during August recess: https://bit.ly/3d8XNSd