

# HOUSING FIRST

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

## 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**

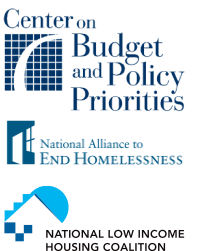
**Remarks**

**Diane Yentel**

*President & CEO*

**National Low Income Housing Coalition**

[dyentel@nlihc.org](mailto:dyentel@nlihc.org)



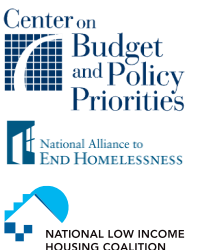
# Homelessness is a Housing Problem

**Gregg Colburn**

*Assistant Professor of Real Estate*

**University of Washington College of  
Build Environments**

[colburn3@uw.edu](mailto:colburn3@uw.edu)

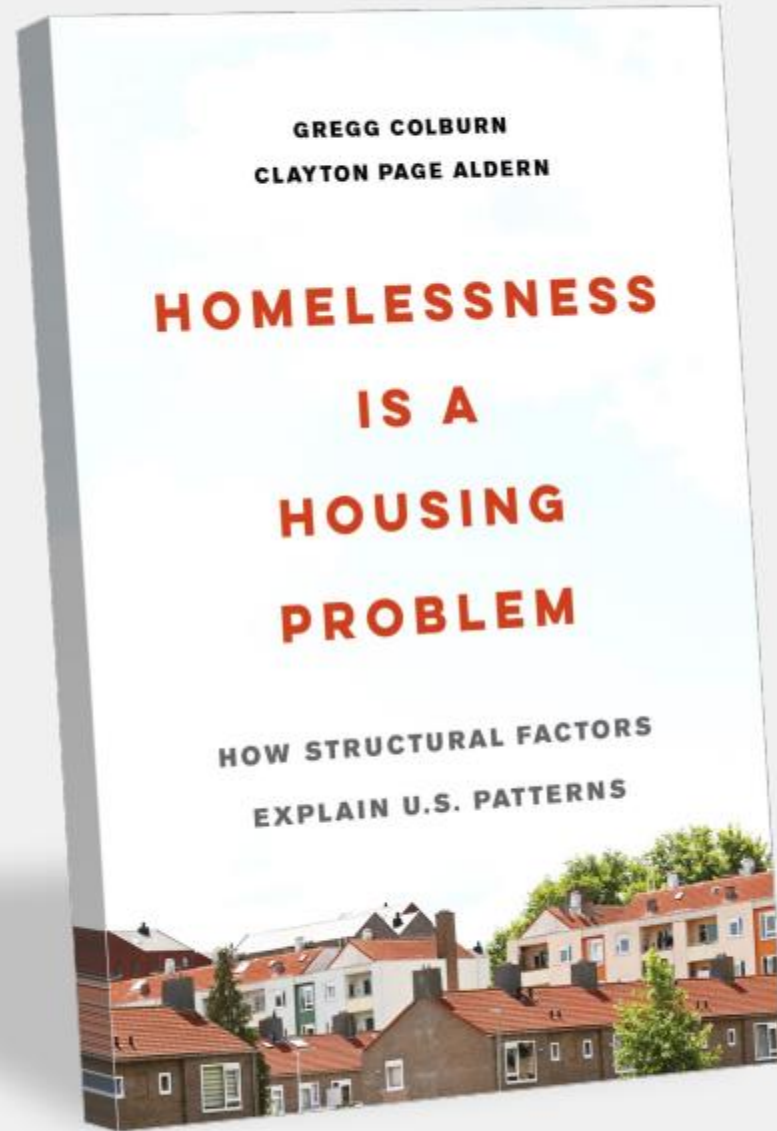


# Homelessness is a **Housing** Problem

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

Gregg Colburn | August 29, 2022  
University of Washington

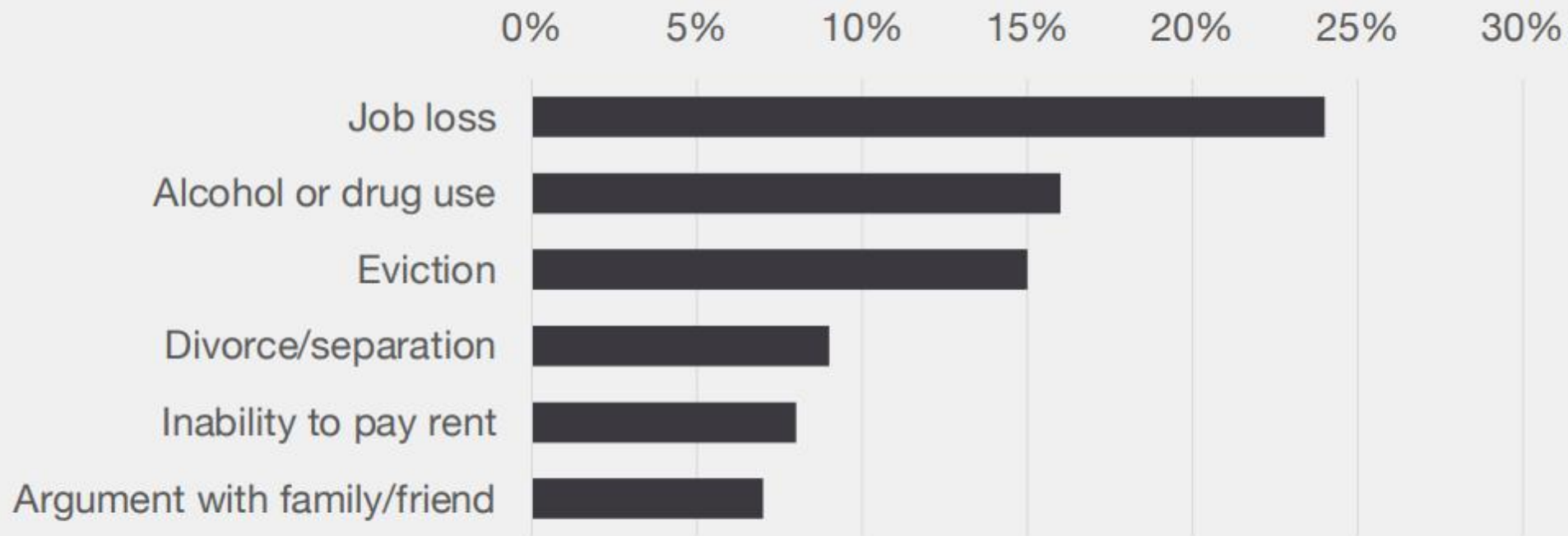




(The book)

# 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:



# 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.



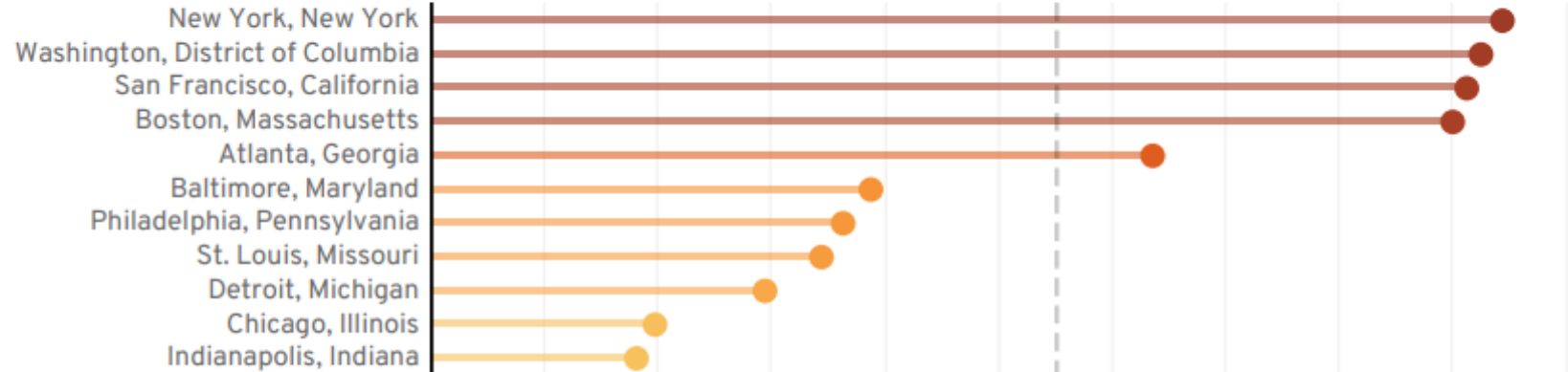
# **Rates** of Homelessness



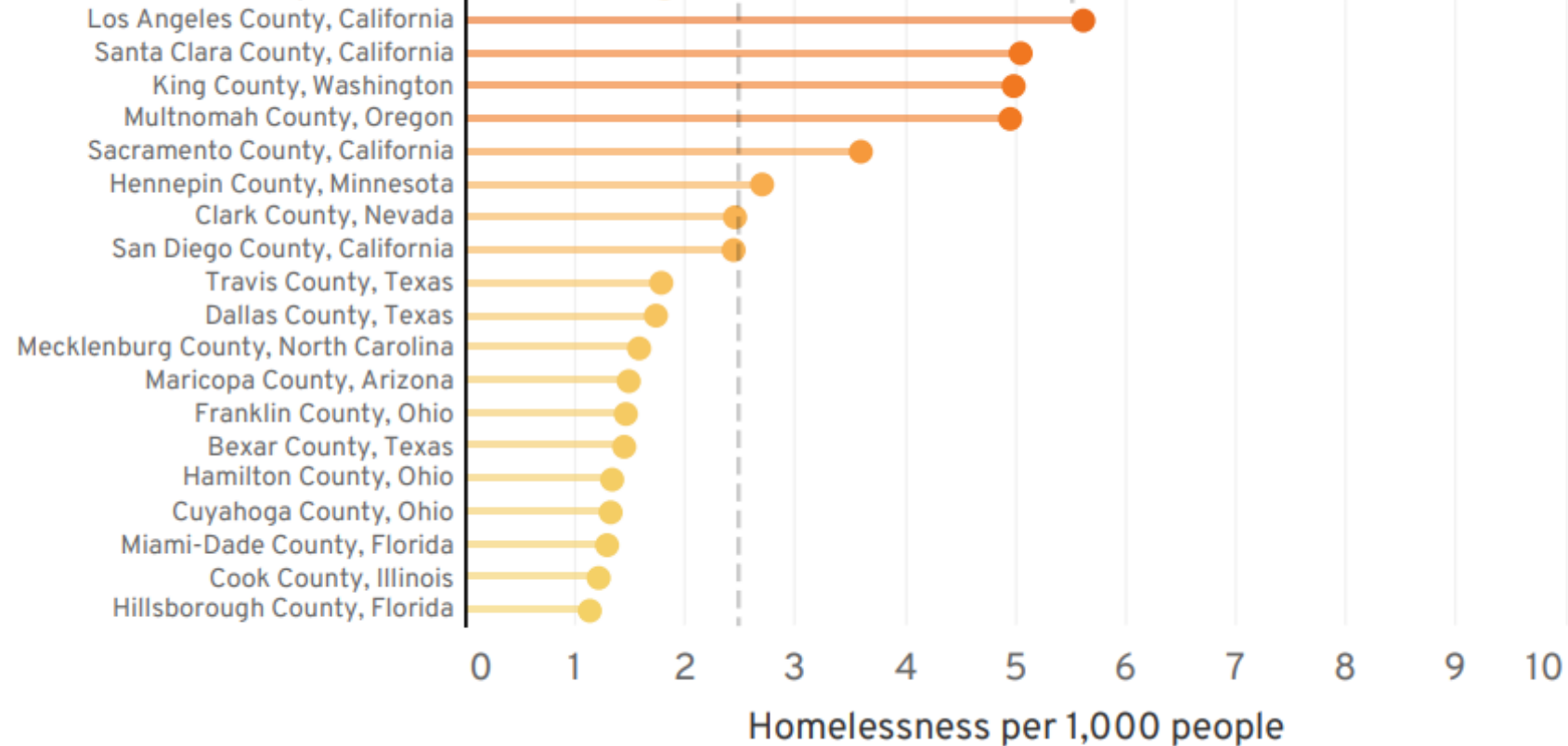
# Per capita rates of homelessness in select U.S. regions, 2019

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

*Cities*



*Counties*



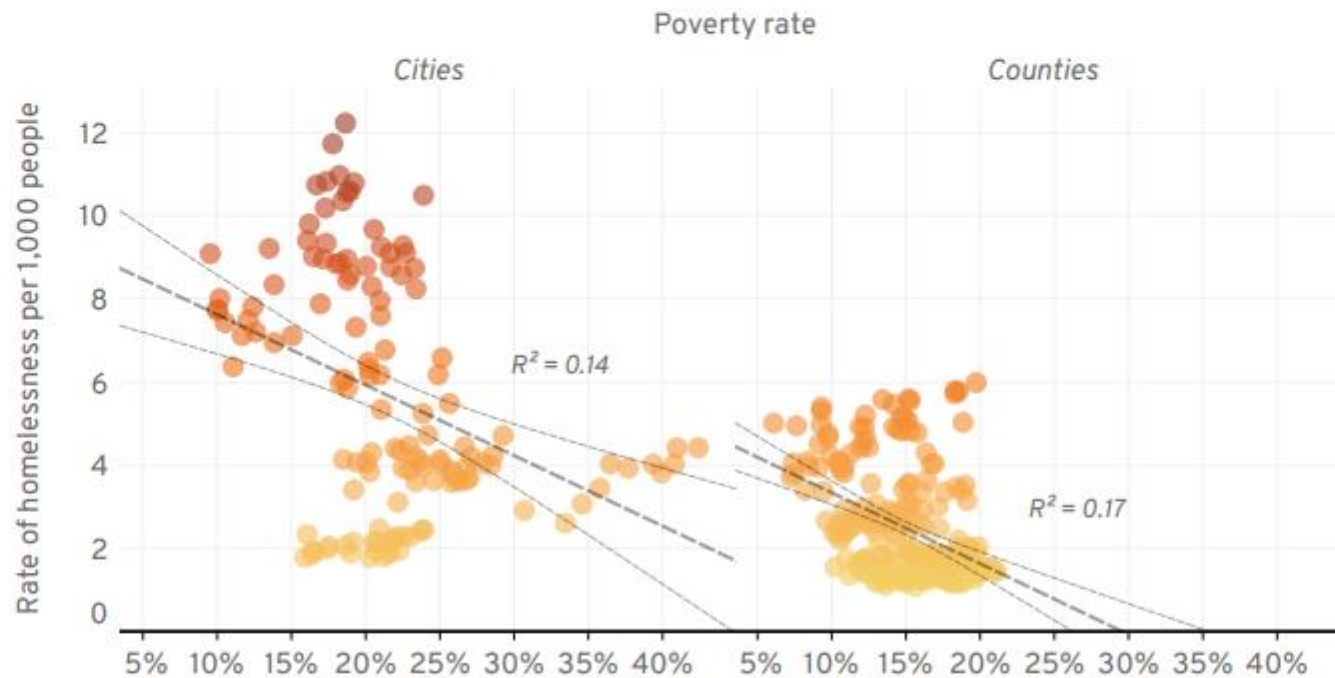
# Potential explanations: **The individual**



# 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.*



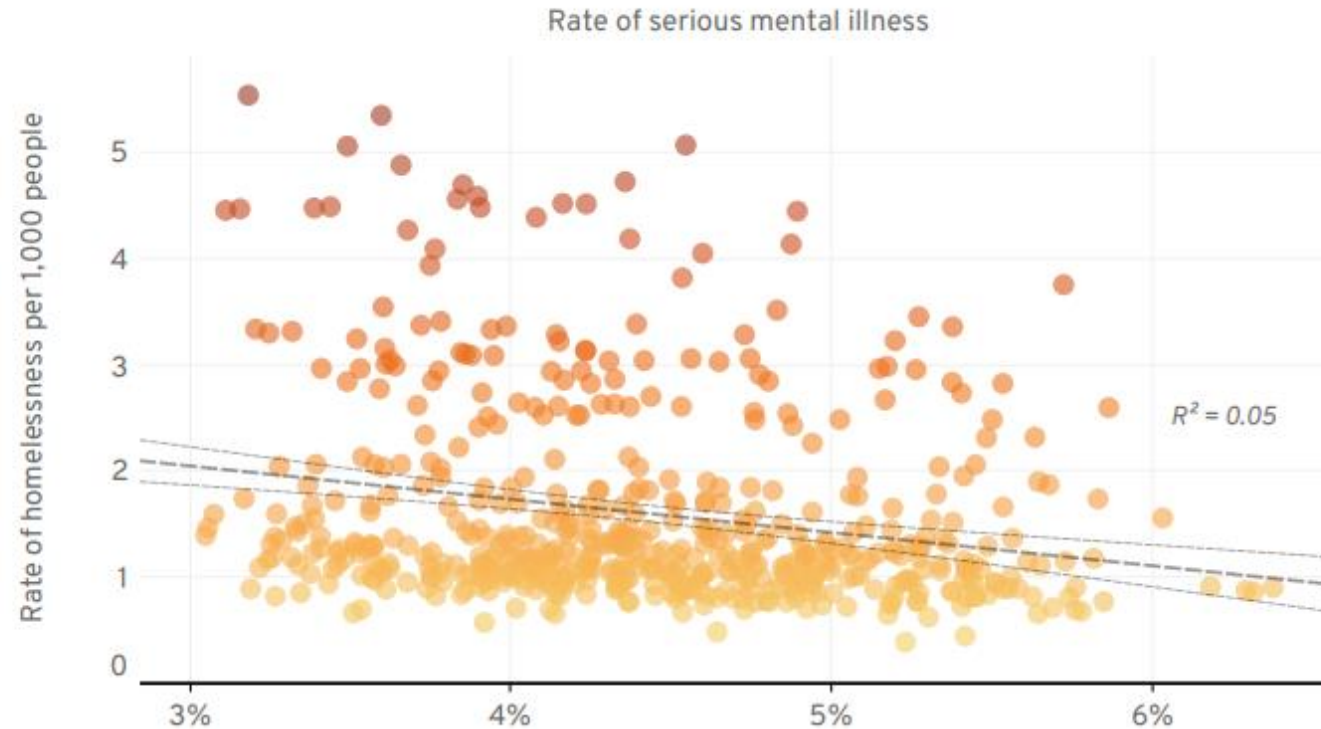
*Bands indicate 95% confidence intervals for the slope of the regression line.*



# 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.*

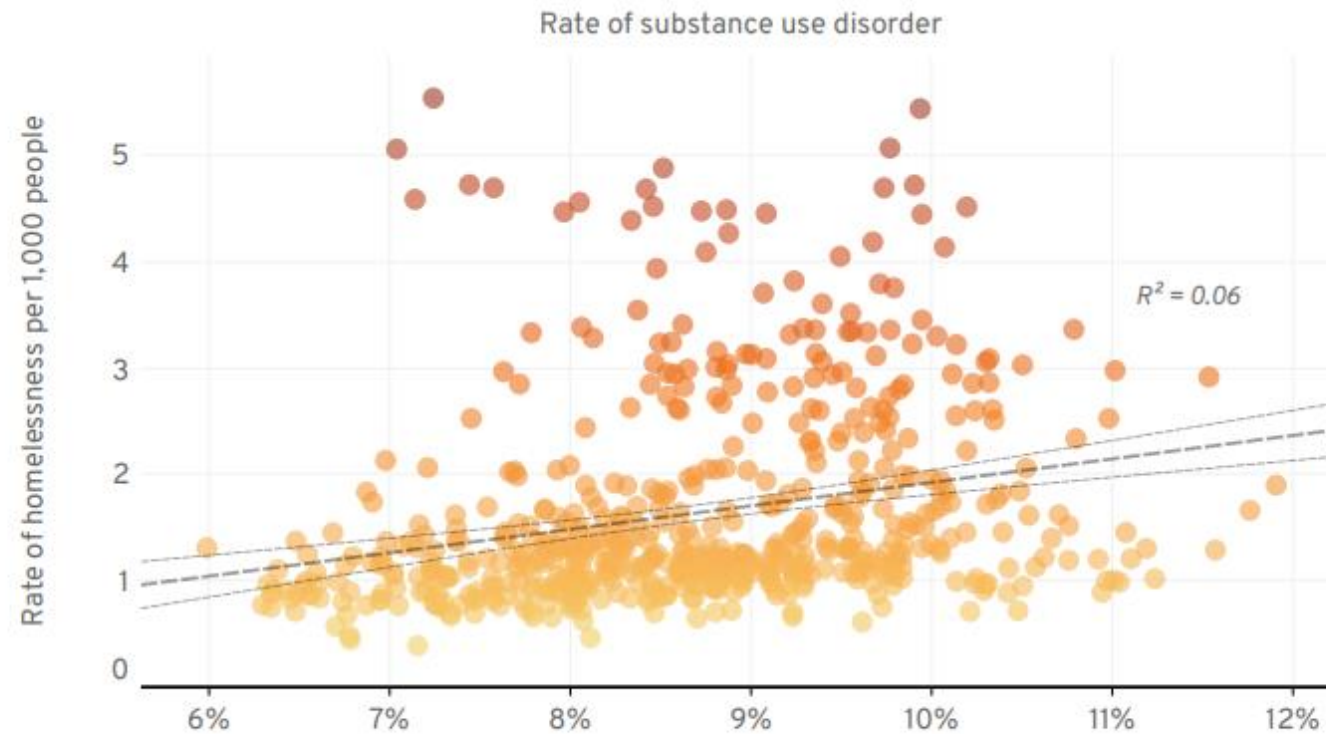


*Bands indicate 95% confidence intervals for the slope of the regression line.*

# 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.*



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

# Potential explanations:

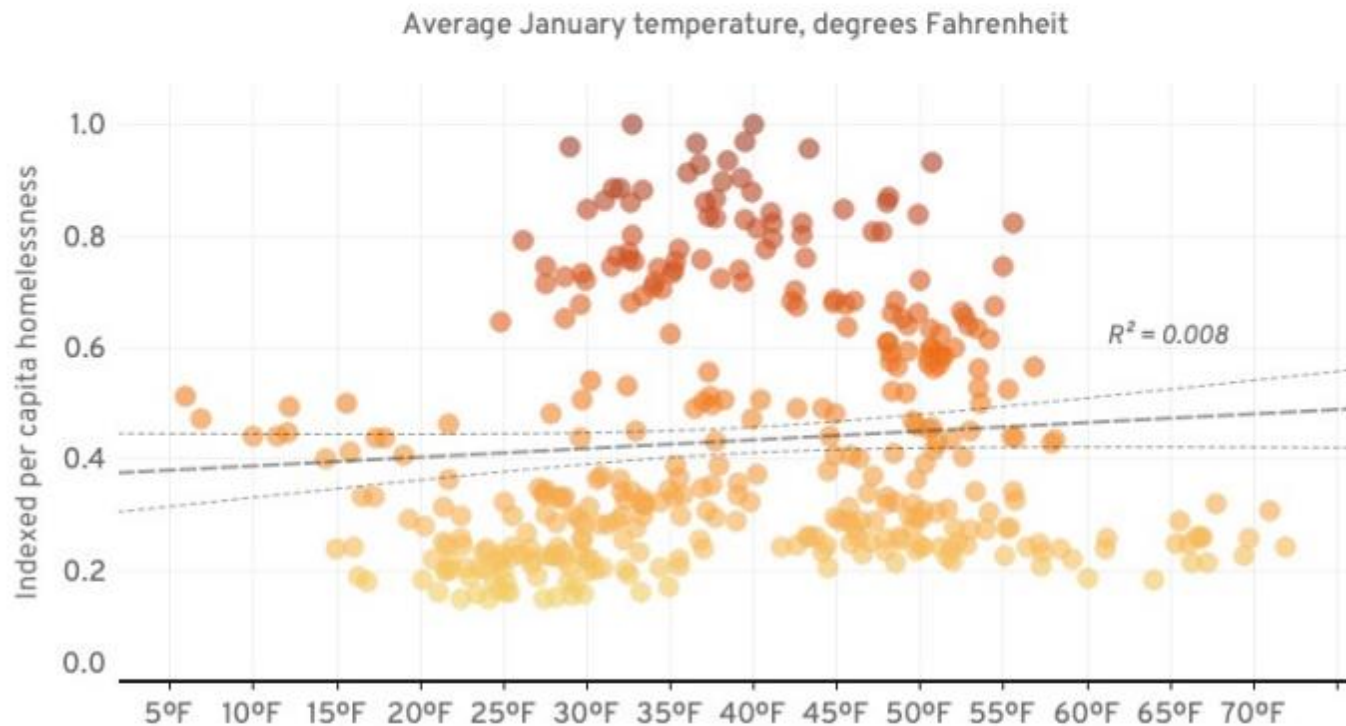
## Local context



# 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.*

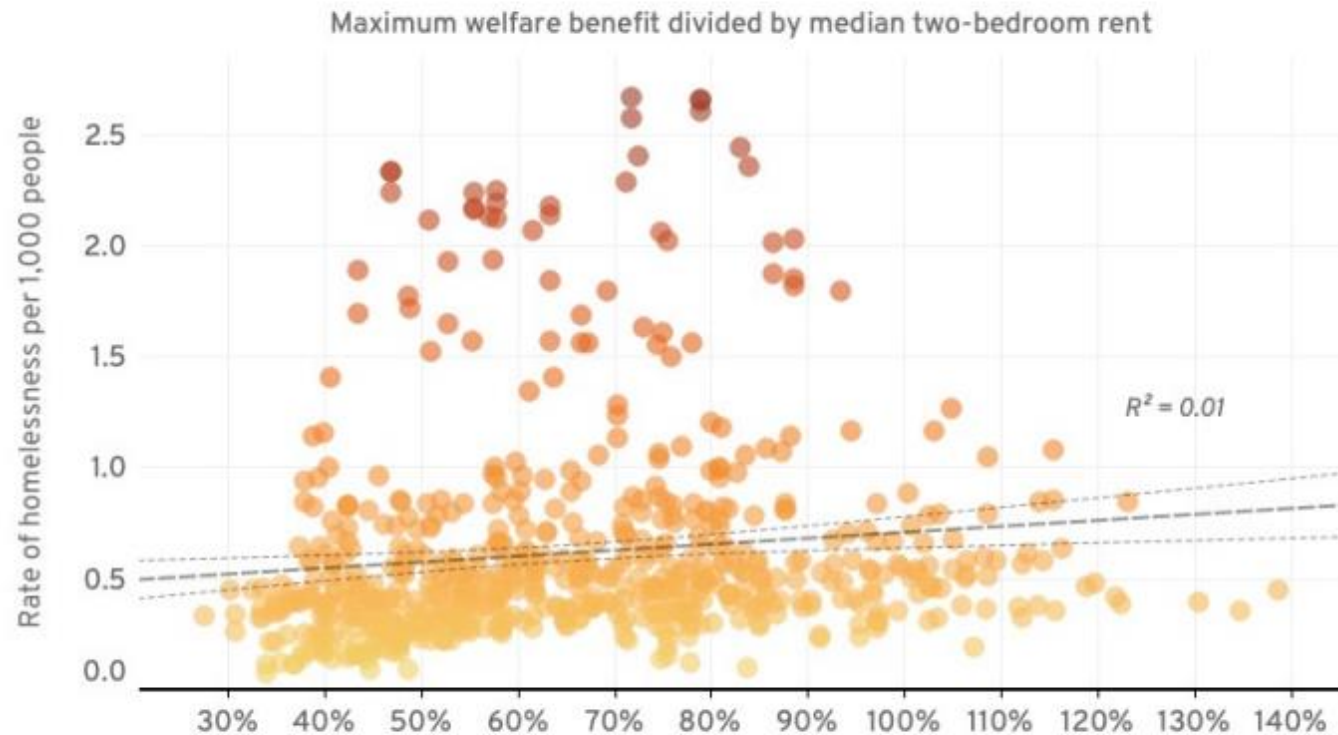


*Indexed rates of homelessness refer to a normalized measure of per capita rates, whereby each region-year pair is scaled with respect to the maximum rate across all cities or counties (over all years). Bands indicate 95% confidence intervals for the slope of the regression line.*

# 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.

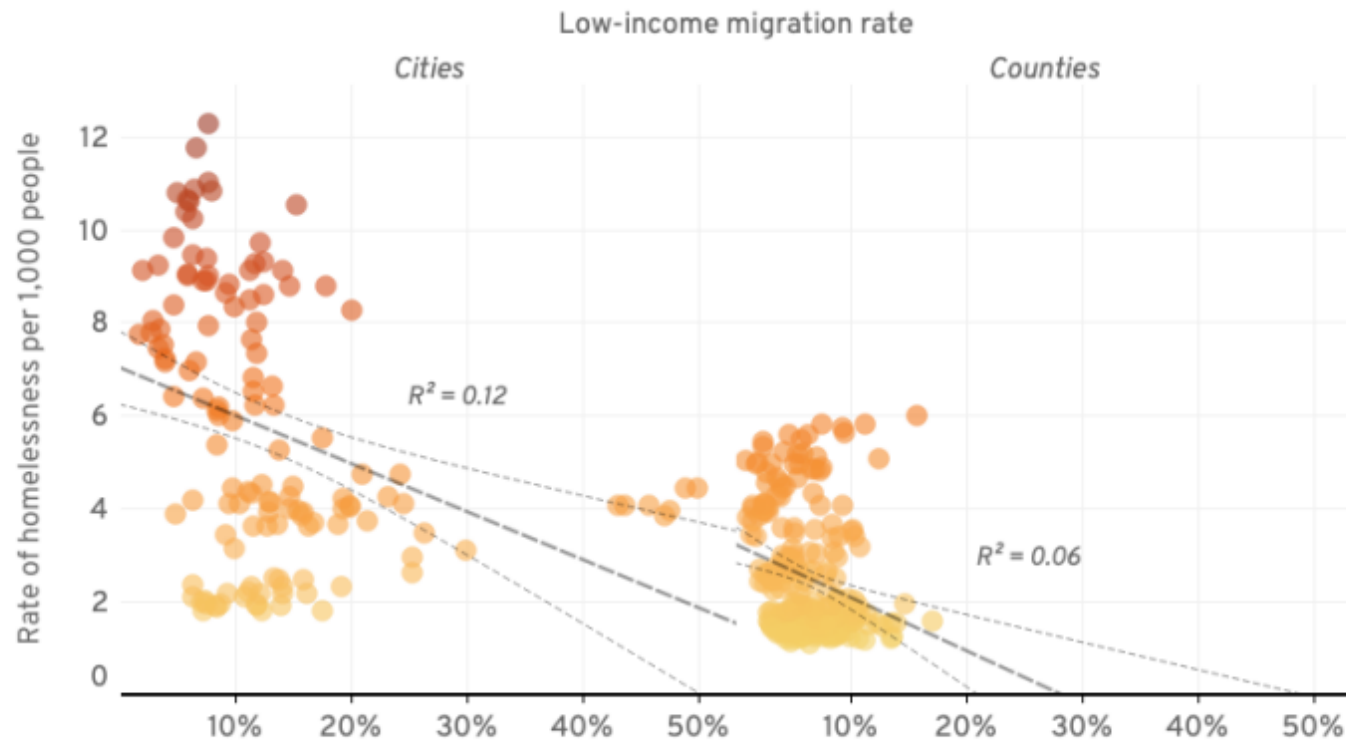


Bands indicate 95% confidence intervals for the slope of the regression line.

# 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.



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.



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

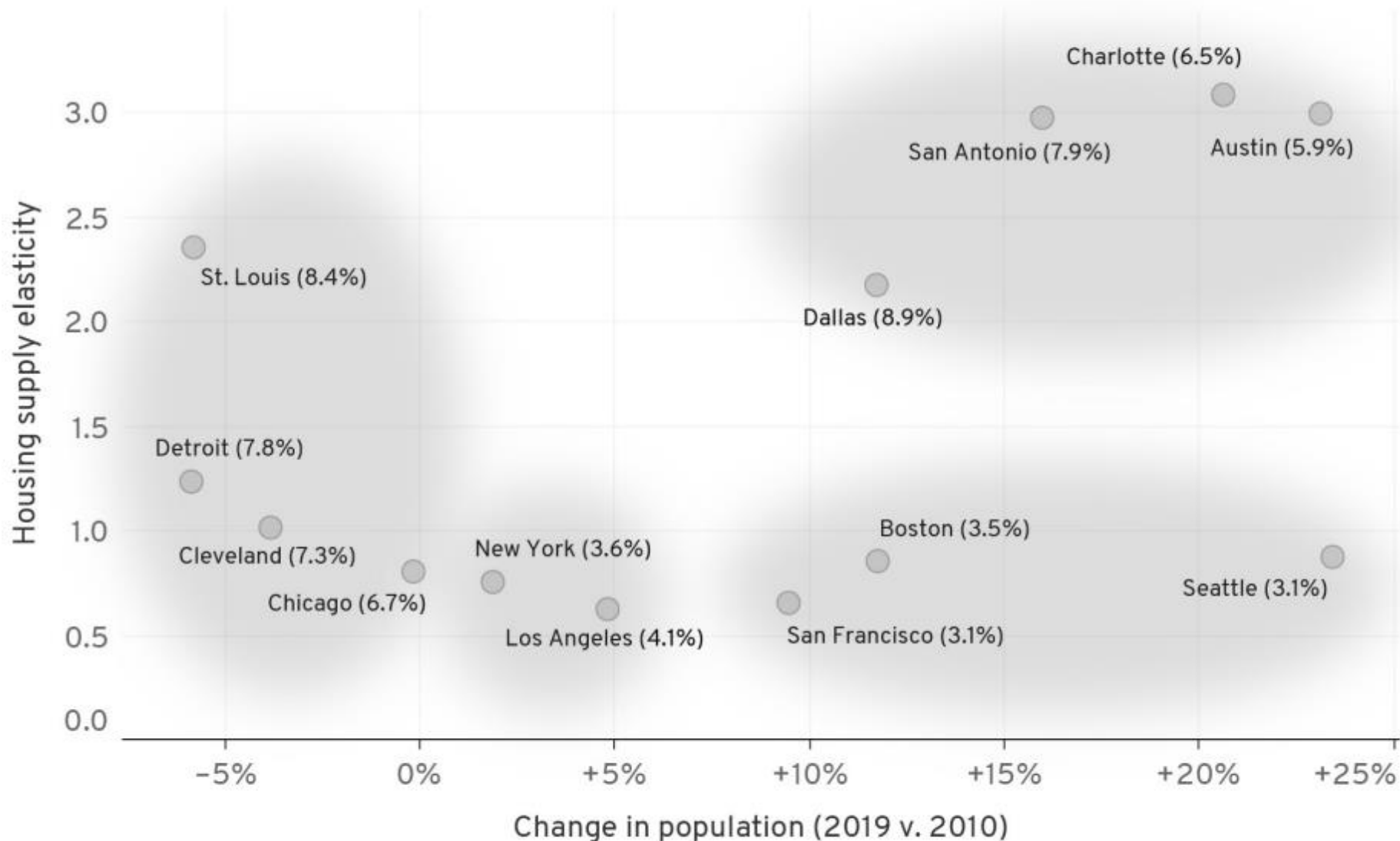
# Typology

- **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: 
$$\frac{\% \Delta \text{ in quantity supplied}}{\% \Delta \text{ in price}}$$

# Typology

## 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 & Aldern (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>

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University of Washington



# Housing First Success Story: Houston, Texas

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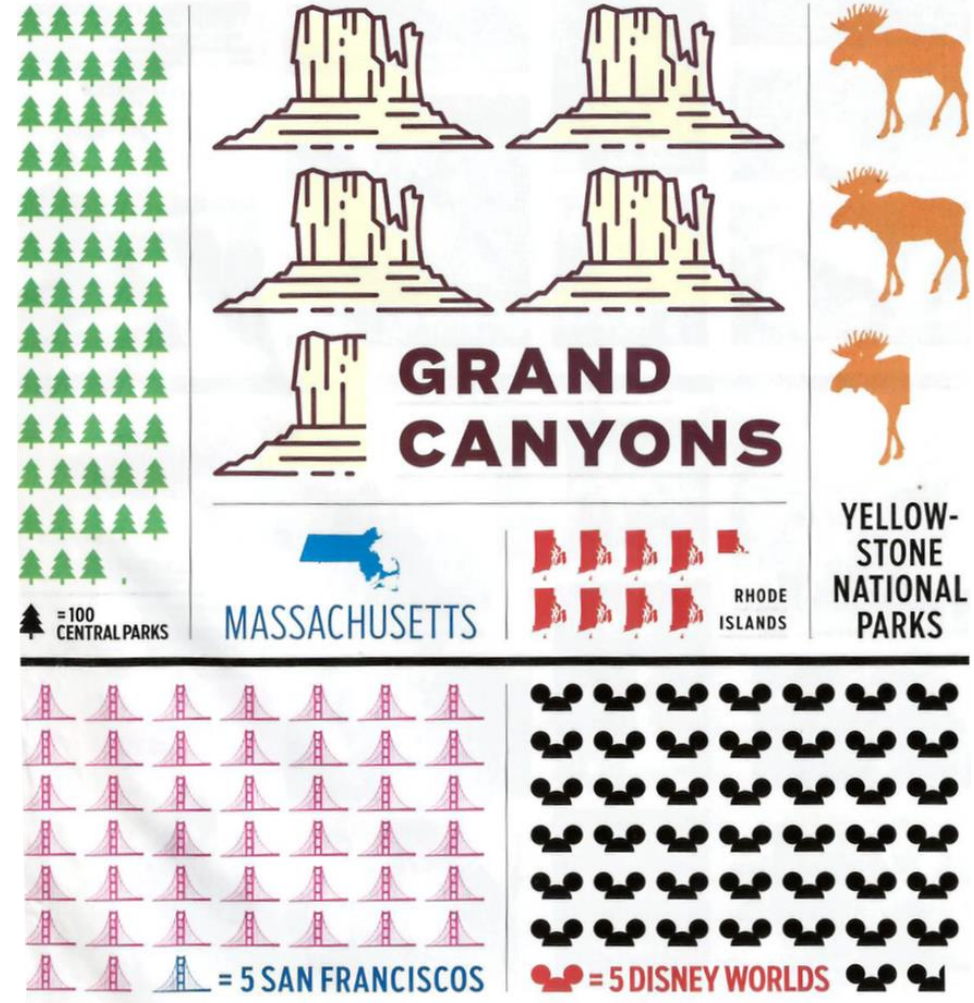
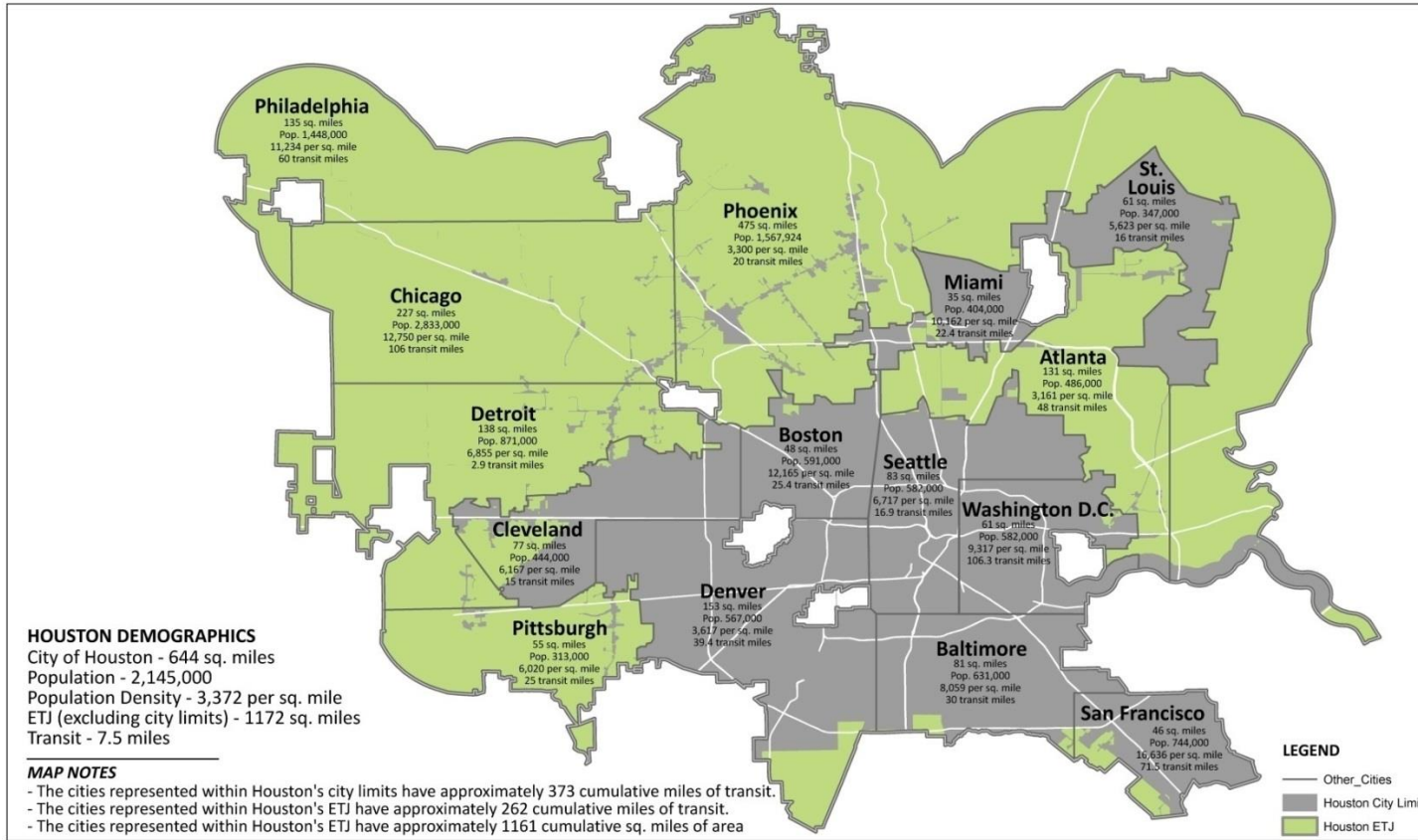


*The Way Home  
Continuum of Care*



# My, how big you are!!

TX-700 CoC = 3,739 sq miles



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

Source: City of Houston, U.S. Census Bureau (2006 Population Estimates and 2000 Land Areas), Wikipedia



November 10, 2010

www.knudsonlp.com



# The Way Home

Non-Profit Organization



Lead agency for the TX-700 Continuum of Care



Coordinate the community response to homelessness

AKA: TX-700 Continuum of Care



100+ partners working together to end homelessness



Permanent housing is the solution

# Reality in 2011

- ✓ We had the 6<sup>th</sup> 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

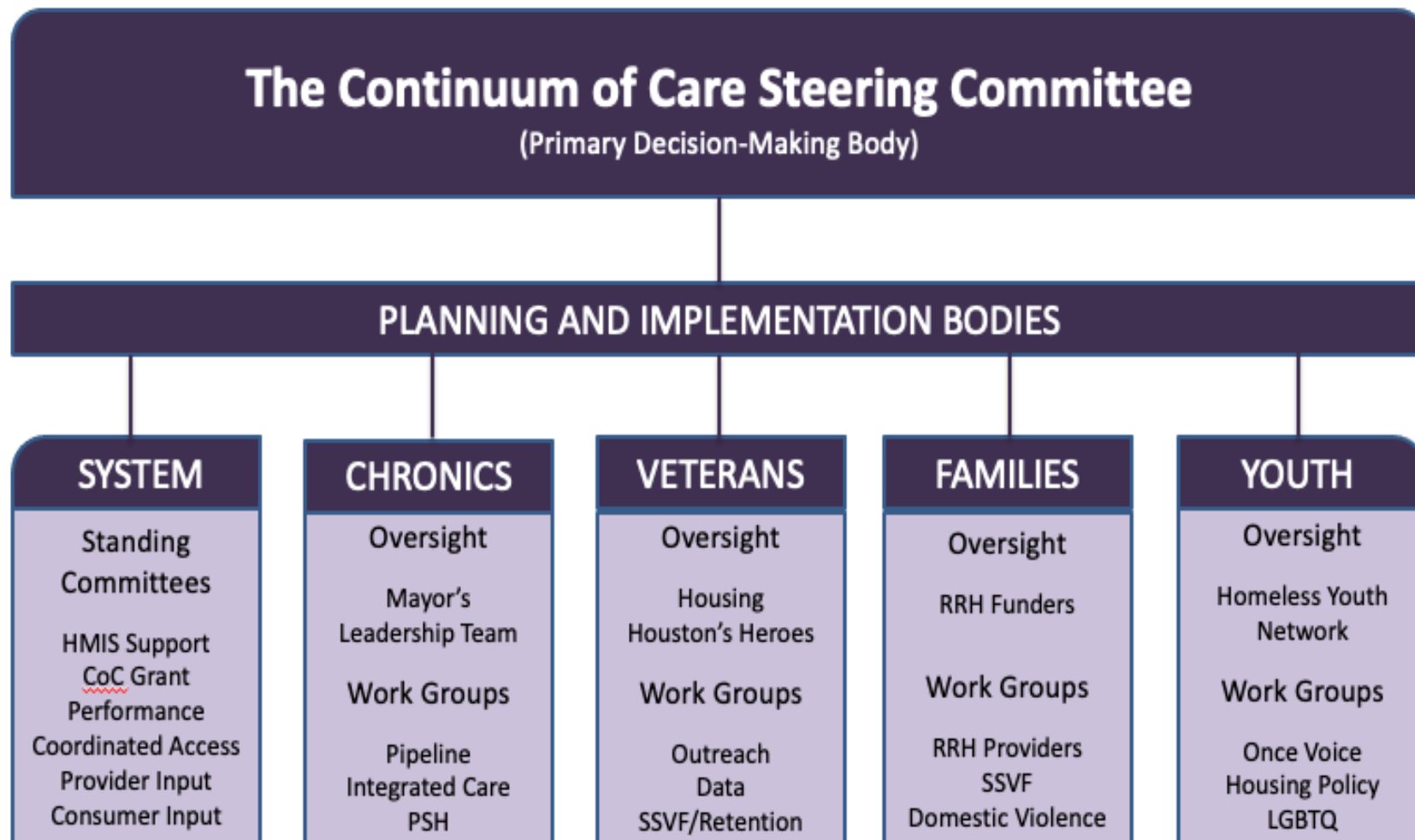
- Two important events in 2012
  - Technical Assistance
    - ✓ Houston was identified as a priority community by HUD
  - Community Charette
    - ✓ Brought everyone together
    - ✓ Identified common goals for the homeless response system



# 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

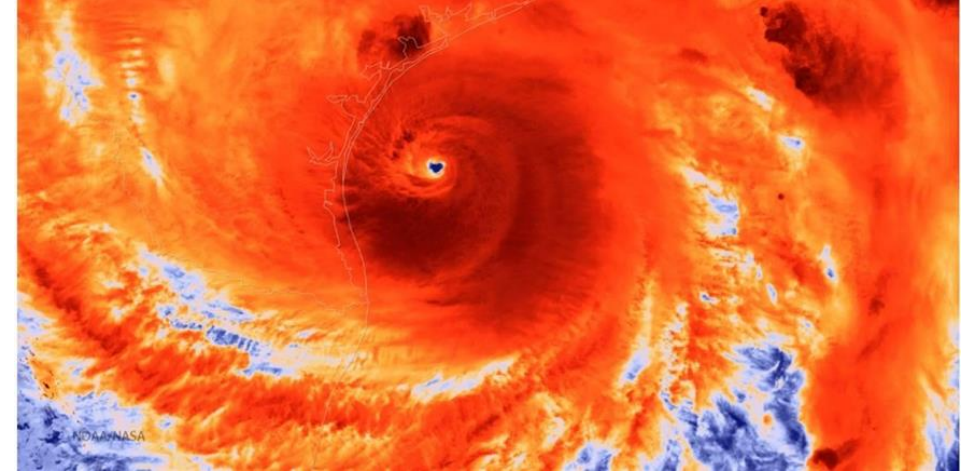
# Final Governance & Implementation



# Hurricane Harvey – August 2017

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- Source: Houston Chronicle





# After Harvey Effects

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**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**

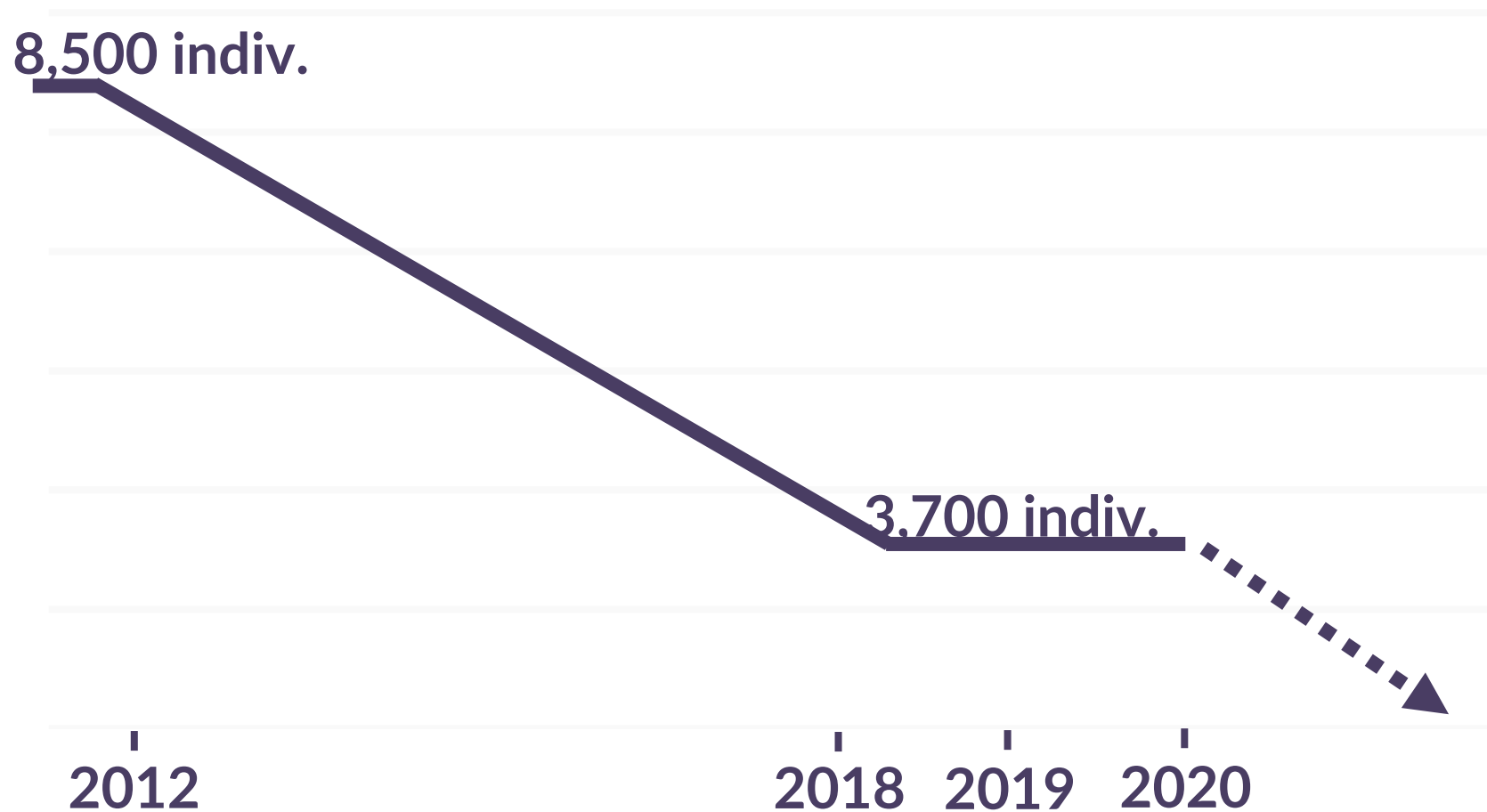
**Nearly 780,000 Texans evacuated their homes, more than 42,000 housed temporarily in 692 shelters**

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

**Houston Housing Authority estimated 1000 affordable housing units destroyed**

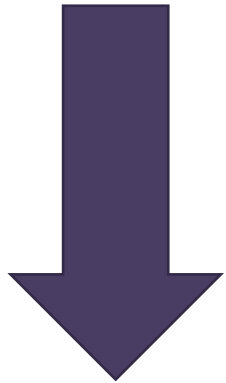
# Homeless Population – Houston / Harris County

- 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"

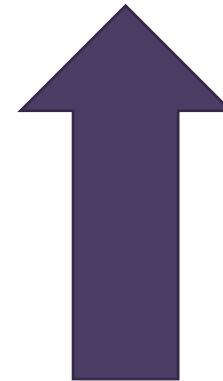


# The Rise in “Street Issues”

54%  
Homeless Population



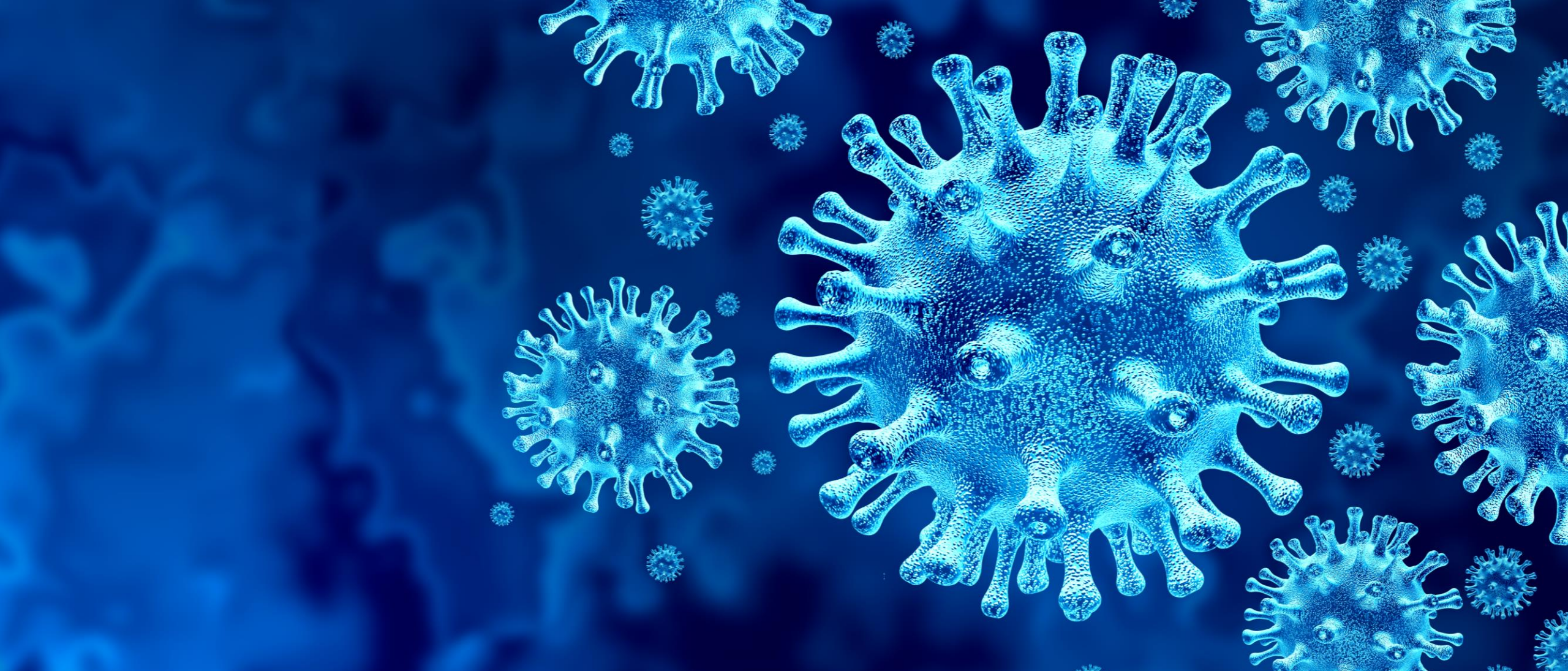
Visibility





# 2019 New Strategic Plan -Need

Program Types	Current System (Units)	Demand	Difference
RRH for Singles	459	2,075	<b>-1616</b>
RHH for Families	553	948	<b>-395</b>
PSH for Singles	5,078	7,377	<b>-2,299</b>
PSH for Families	117	86	<b>+31</b>



**COVID-19**

# CCHP

- 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

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Bridge to Permanent Supportive Housing

---

12-Month Rapid Re-housing

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Diversion

---

Auxiliary/ Social Distancing Emergency Shelter

---

Mental Health Case Management

---

Enhanced Street Outreach

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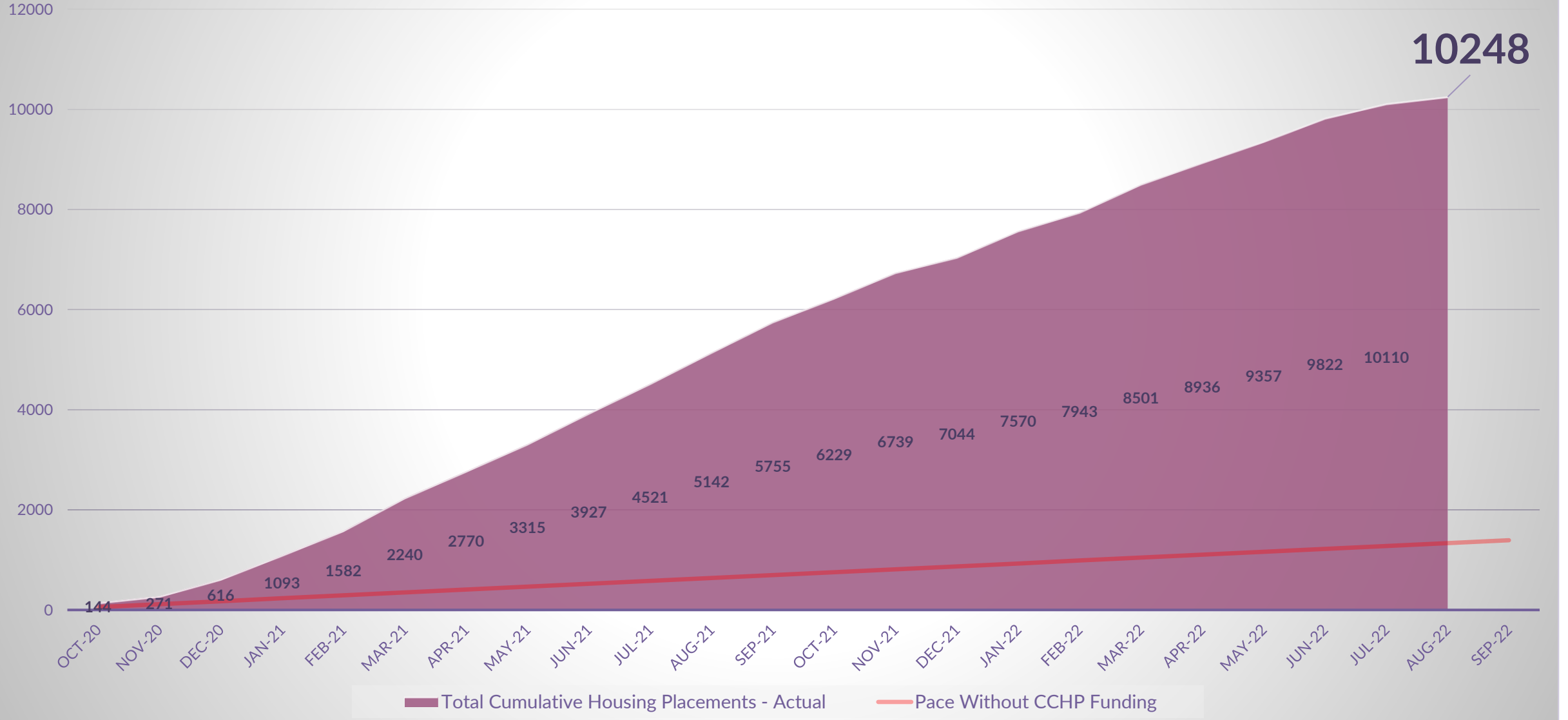
PSH Housing Preservation

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# The Way Home System Performance CCHP Funding People Served Tracker

August 9, 2022





# 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

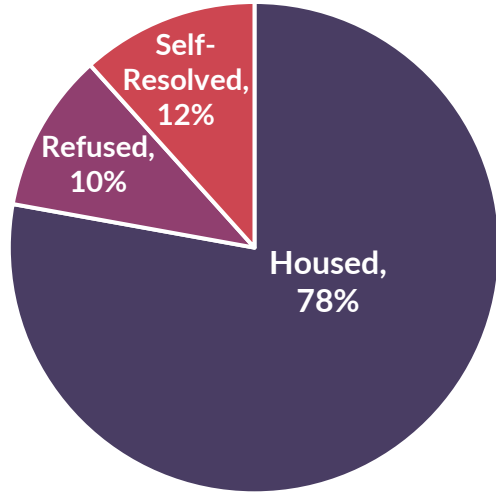
Payment of Landlord Incentive Fees for every unit dedicated to the system

# Encampment Response Strategy

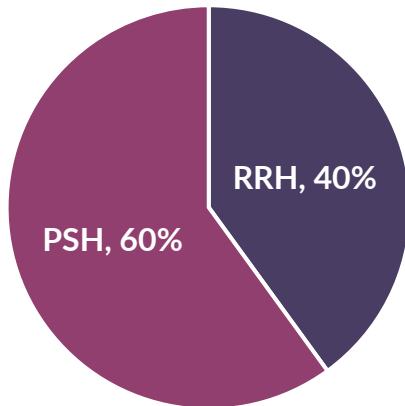
- The CCHP allowed for the roll-out of an Encampment Decommissioning program that has demonstrated proven results in placing individuals living on the streets into housing.
  - Official [Encampment Response Strategy](#) available.
  - Currently being used by as a national best practice.
  - Houston Chronicle [cover story](#) featured our efforts.
- 

# Encampments Decommissioned - 57

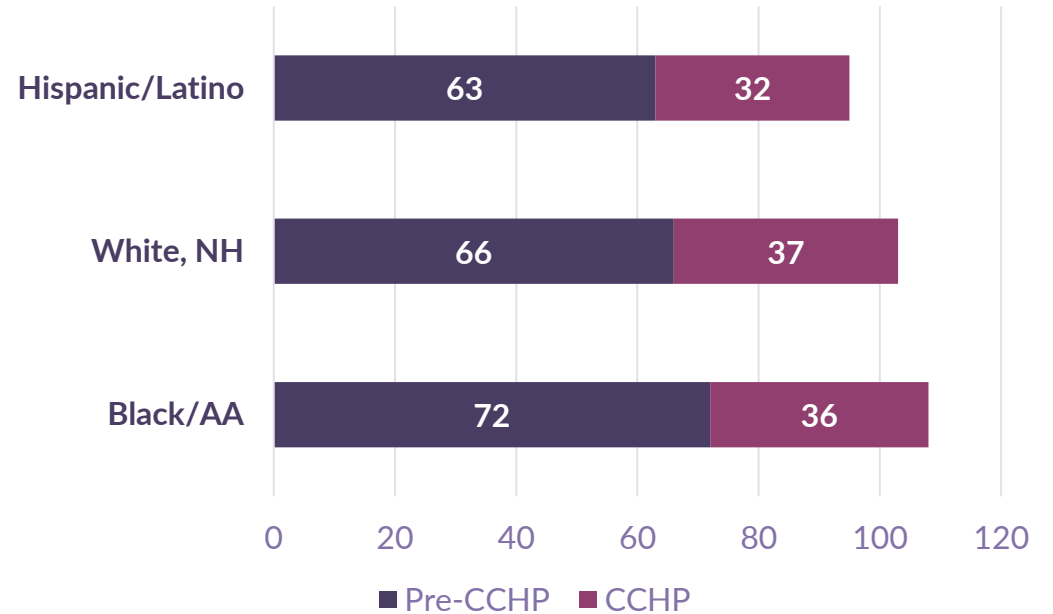
Individuals Engaged, n=343



Permanent Housing



Avg Days from Referral to Move-In



# 63% reduction in homelessness since 2011

Overall Homelessness

63%

Chronic Homelessness

69%

Family Homelessness

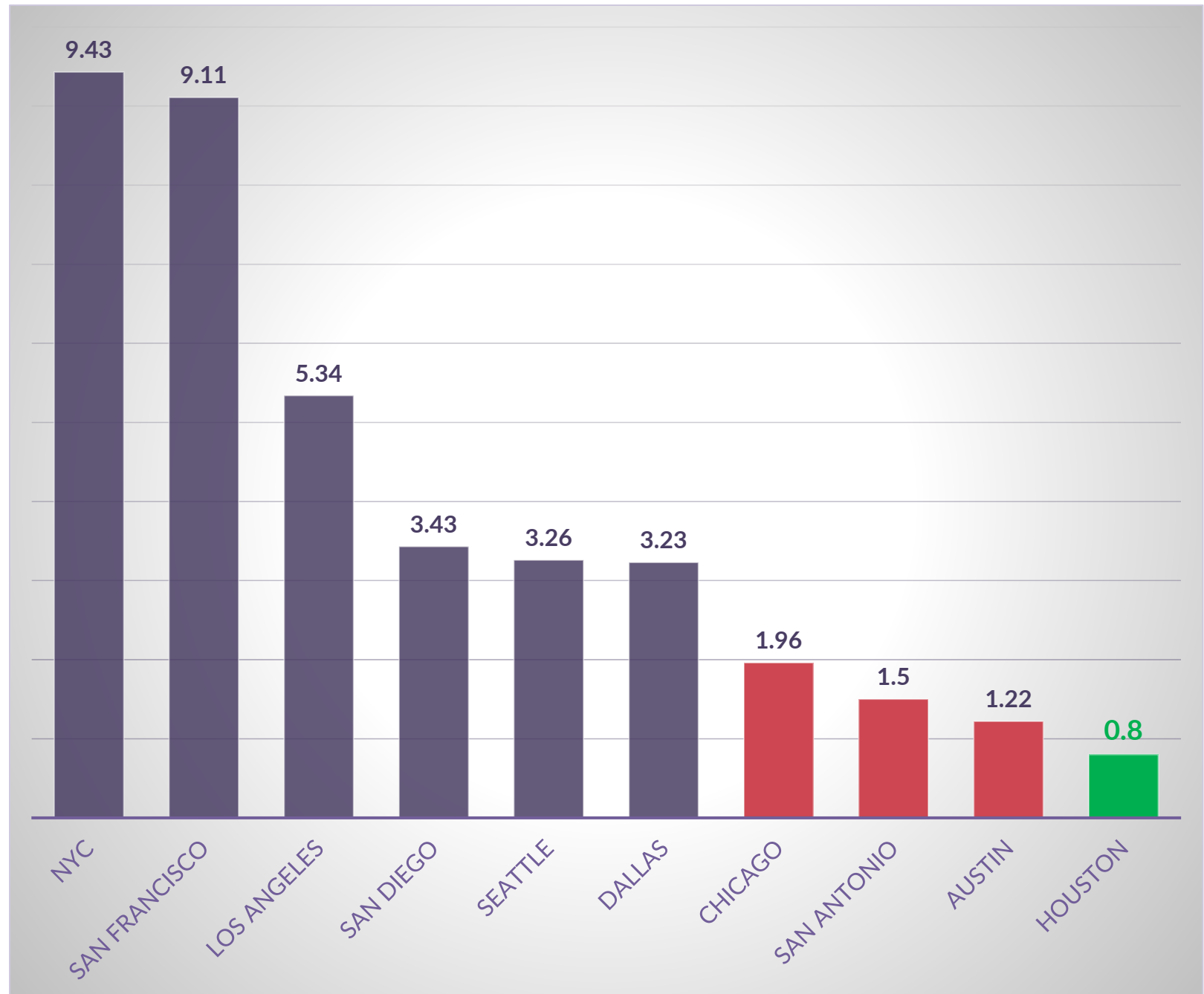
81%

Veteran Homelessness

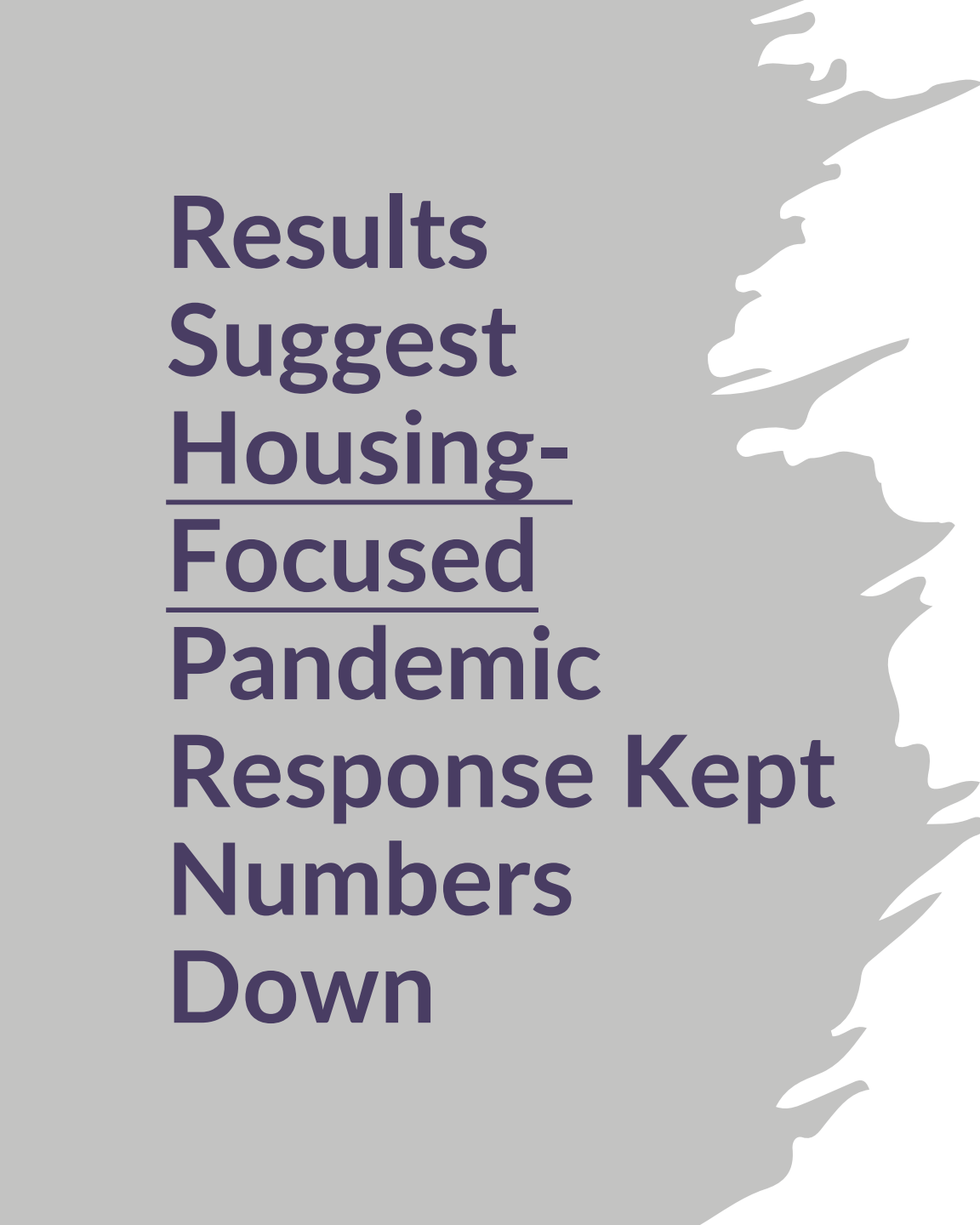
84%

Functional Zero - 2015

# Homeless Count Population Comparison – Major US Cities\*



\*2020 Homeless County 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 CHRONICLE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 2022 • HOUSTONCHRONICLE.COM • VOL. 121, NO. 106 • \$2.00 ★★

## City, Harris County invest \$100M in plan to cut homelessness in half

By R.A. Schuetz  
STAFF WRITER

Houston and Harris County announced Wednesday afternoon a \$100 million increase in funds they are funneling into efforts to reduce homelessness in the area. They had previously committed \$65 million in federal COVID-related funding to the initiative.

"In Houston, we either go big or we go home," said Mayor Syl-

vester Turner in a press conference announcing the funds. "And today, we are going big so ... Houstonians can go home." He said he hoped the funds would help cut the region's homeless population in half by helping people secure housing.

"Housing is a human right," said Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo. "And in Harris County, housing is something we fight for together."

The announcement came

hours after city council voted, 13 to 4, to fund the transformation of a city-owned building in Fifth Ward into a place where people moved out of an encampment can live, along with pets and loved ones, while they await their permanent housing. The facility, known as a navigation center, is key to a plan by the city, Harris County, and their partners to reduce the number of people living in the streets.

*Homeless continues on A8*



Jon Shapley / Staff file photo

Police officers hand out blankets last year. A new program is moving people from encampments to permanent housing.

### Index

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"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

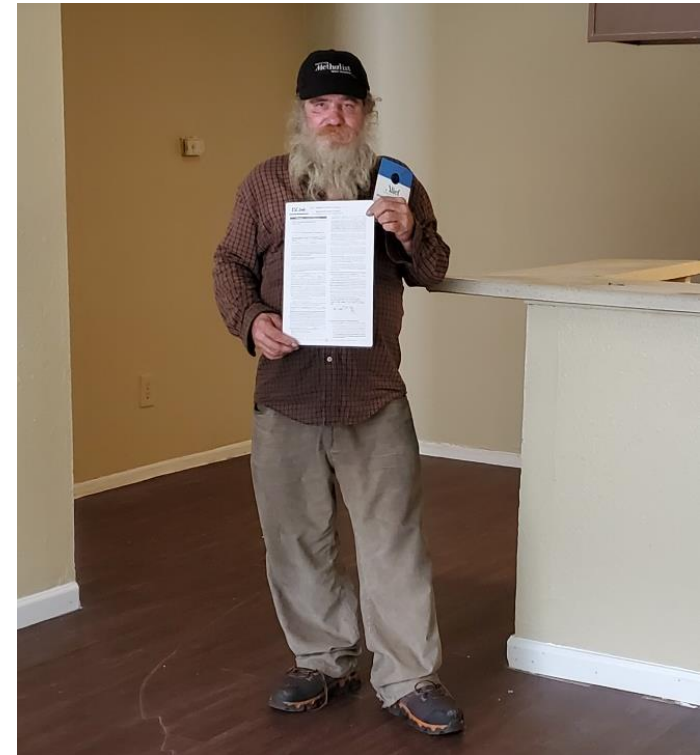
# Houston and Harris County announce increased investment in efforts to reduce homelessness by \$100 million.



# Community COVID HOUSING

PROGRAM

*Photos courtesy of The Beacon*







*Community*  
**COVID HOUSING**  
PROGRAM

Photos courtesy of The Salvation Army of Greater Houston



# 25,500+ Housed Since 2011

---

- BBVA Stadium
- Capacity: 22,039

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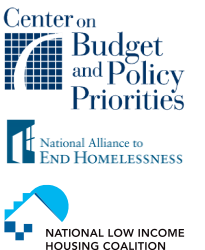
# **Housing First Success Story: Ending Homelessness for People with Disabilities Or Substance Use**

**Issues**  
**Dora Leong Gallo**

*President & CEO*

**A Community of Friends**

[dgallo@acof.org](mailto:dgallo@acof.org)



# Homelessness and Housing First

*Homelessness is a Housing Problem*

August 29, 2022



Dignity Excellence Community Equity

*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.*

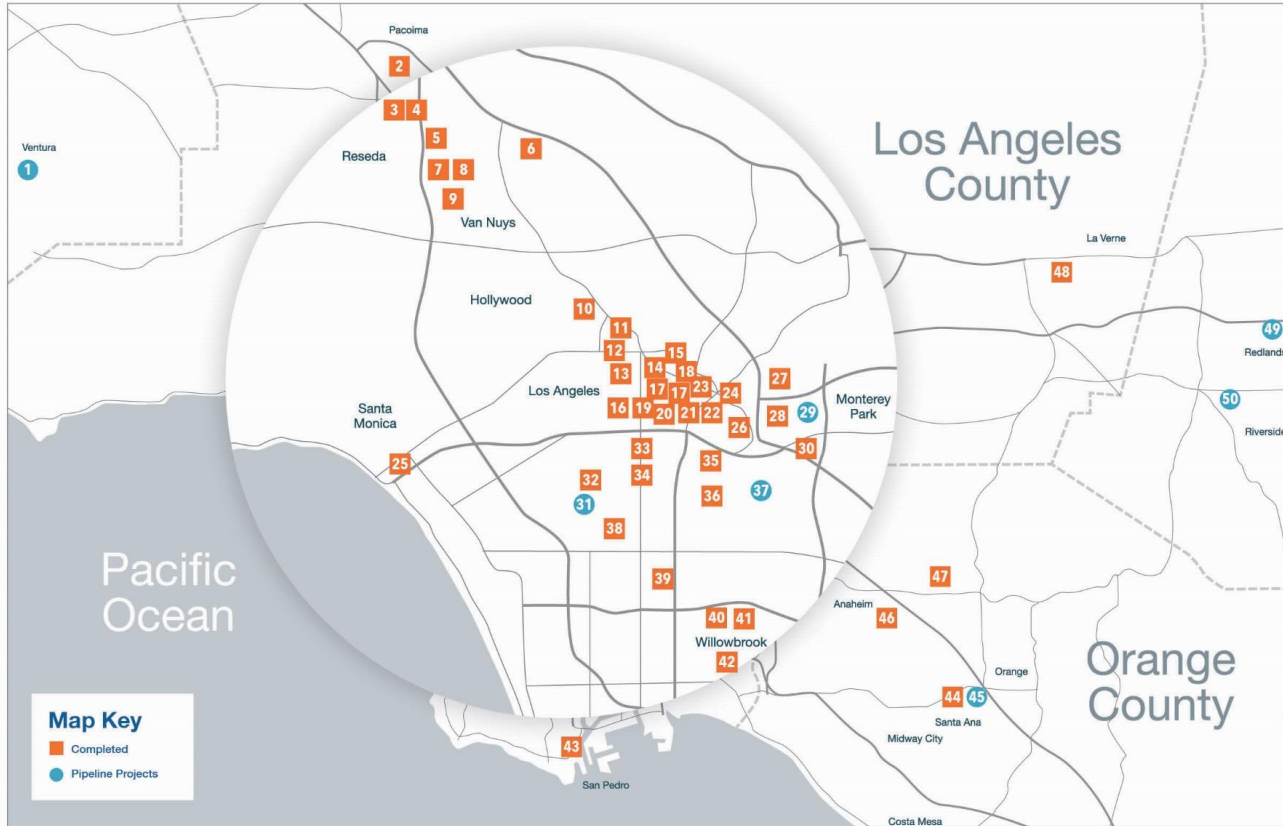


# ACOF COMMUNITIES



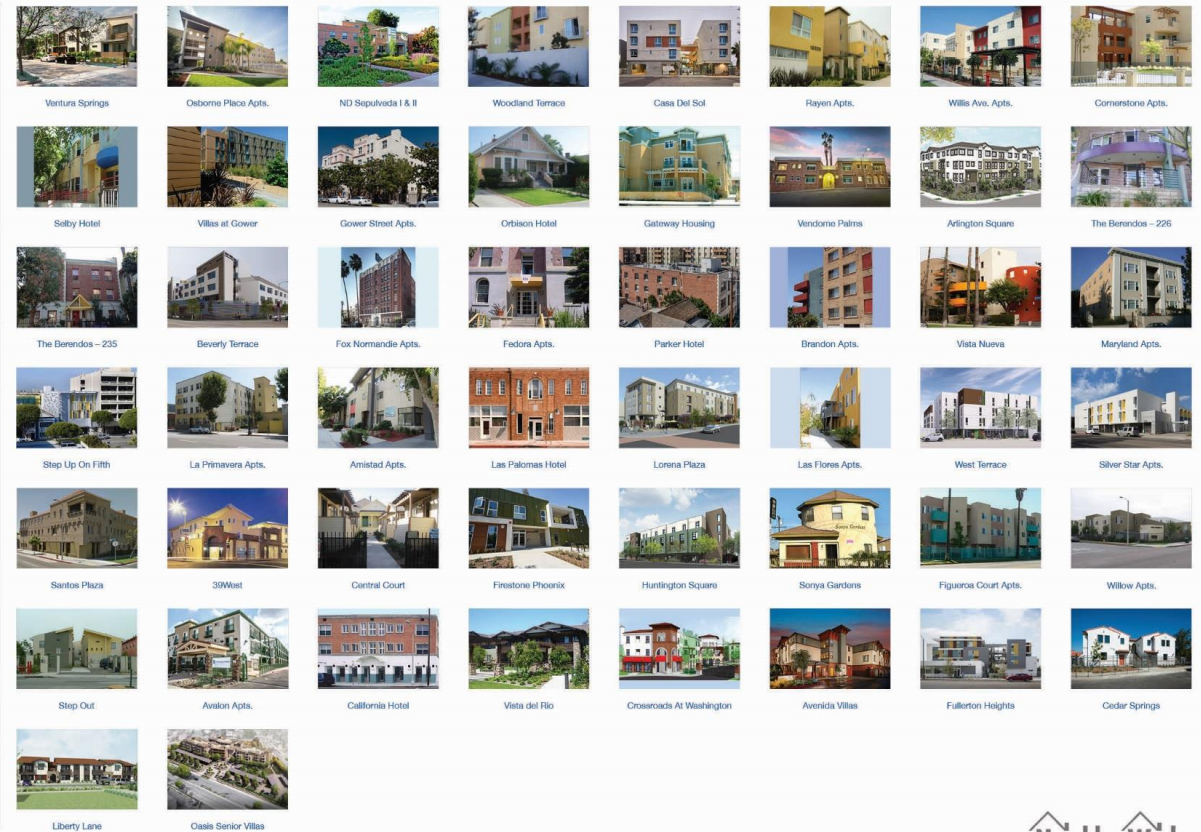
3701 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700  
Los Angeles, CA 90010

(213) 480-0809  
www.acof.org



**Map Key**

- Completed
- Pipeline Projects



\*as of August 2022

- 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





- 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*



- 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

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[www.acof.org](http://www.acof.org)

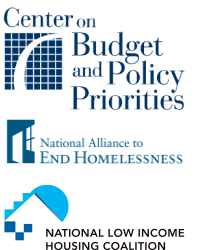
# Emerging Threats

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# Local Advocacy

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**Michele Knapp**

*Executive Director*

Diakonos/Fifth Street Ministries

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**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 Snapshot of Homelessness in Congressional District 10

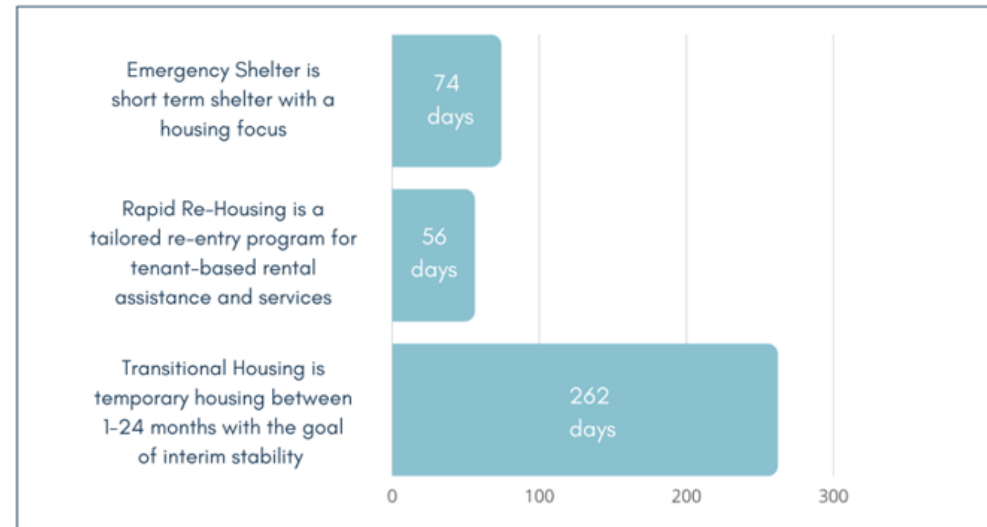
1,127 people in 872 households experienced homelessness last year, of which . . .



- 1 in 5 people were children
- Nearly half of adults have income (47%) - 1 in 5 is working
- 18% of adults are domestic violence survivors
- Of those housed over the last year, only 4% return to homelessness after 6 months

### Housing First project types help reduce the length of time homeless!

The number of days homeless on average is shorter for Emergency Shelter and Rapid Re-Housing projects over Transitional Housing.



Once stably housed, individuals are better able to take advantage of wrap-around services - to help support housing stability, employment, and recovery.

\*Data includes dedicated homeless projects in Alexander, Burke, Catawba, Iredell, and Rutherford Counties over a year using the Homeless Management Information System between 10/1/2020 - 9/30/2021. Excludes Coordinated Entry, Rapid Re-Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing programs that serve areas outside of CD10.



NCCEH

A marketing partner can elevate your message and leverage its power.



The screenshot shows the top section of the IREDELL FREE NEWS website. On the left is a logo featuring a stylized leaf with colorful segments (purple, blue, green, yellow, orange) inside a white square frame with a blue border. To the right of the logo, the text "IREDELL FREE NEWS" is displayed in large, bold, white letters on a dark blue background. Below this, the words "ALWAYS LOCAL" and "ALWAYS FREE" are written in smaller white text, with the website URL "WWW.IREDELLFREENEWS.COM" in the center. A red hamburger menu icon is positioned below the navigation bar.

**Rep. McHenry learns about local efforts to house, support homeless at Fifth Street Ministries**



The screenshot shows the WSOC-TV website. The top navigation bar includes the WSOC-TV logo, the current temperature "82°" with a cloud icon, and a "WATCH" button. Below the navigation bar, there are links for "NEWS", "WEATHER", "VOTE 2022", "BACK TO SCHOOL", "YOUR704", "LIVE STREAM", "COMMUNITY", "CONTACT US", and "TELEMUN". A red banner below the navigation bar reads "BREAKING NEWS | Baker Mayfield named Panthers' starting quarterback". The main content area features a "LOCAL" section with the headline "Statesville homeless shelter asks for more federal funding for affordable housing". To the right of the headline is a video thumbnail showing two news anchors, a woman in a yellow top and a man in a blue suit, sitting at a desk.

**LOCAL**  
**Statesville homeless shelter asks for more federal funding for affordable housing**



The screenshot shows the Queen City News website. The top navigation bar includes the "CAROLINAS' OWN QUEENCITY NEWS" logo, the current temperature "83° CHARLOTT", and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there are links for "News", "Weather", "Watch", "Sports", "QC News Now", and "More". The main content area features a "STATESVILLE" section with the headline "NC Congressman Patrick McHenry pushes to end homelessness". To the right of the headline is a video thumbnail showing a news anchor in a red top, with a "NEW AT 6" graphic overlaid on the image.

**STATESVILLE**  
**NC Congressman Patrick McHenry pushes to end homelessness**

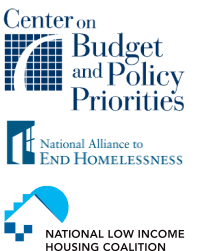
# Take Action

**Steve Berg**

*Vice President for Programs and Policy*

**National Alliance to End Homelessness**

[sberg@naeh.org](mailto: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](mailto: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

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# 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/3vlbn5o>

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

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

