



Evidence for Action

Evidence-Based Strategies to Solve Homelessness

Anne N. Sosin, MPH

Where We Are Now

Shortage of affordable housing pushes many into housing precarity



Medical crisis, increase in rent, loss of work, apartment sold, intimate partner violence push some into homelessness

Difficulty maintaining employment or education

Substance use begins or is exacerbated

Physical and mental health declines

Inadequate shelter or interim options

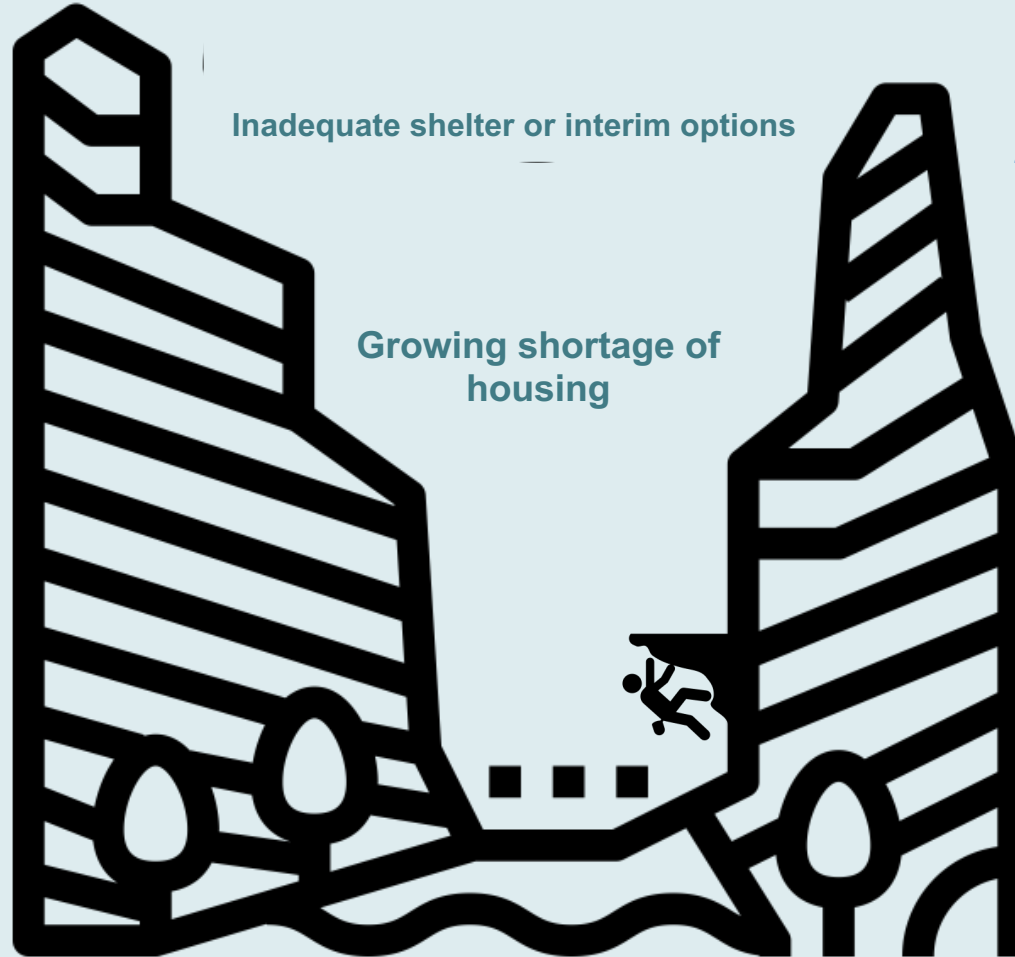
Growing shortage of housing

Homelessness episode resolved, housing insecurity persists chronically

Need to provide housing readiness or meet eligibility criteria to secure shelter or housing

Individuals caught in institutional cycle of shelter, jail, hospital.

Lack of shelter or stable options adds barriers to searching for housing



Created by Becris from Noun Project



Growing impacts on communities



Where We Are Now

OPINION

Ben Smith, Julie Vieth, Matthew Siket, Ryan Sexton: A crisis in our emergency departments

Vermonters are suffering, right now. They need help.

February 8, 2024, 8:03 am

Burlington deploys overdose community response team

City continues to see a record number of overdoses



Updated: 12:58 PM EDT Oct 17, 2023

Infinite Scroll Enabled

Lauren Granada



Inadequate shelter or interim options

Growing shortage of housing

Local News

Homelessness in Vermont has increased – and towns are responding differently to the problem

Vermont Public | By Liam Elder-Connors
Published November 3, 2023 at 5:00 AM EDT



LISTEN • 4:20



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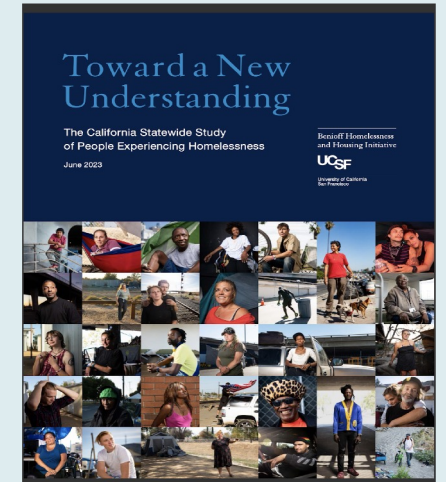
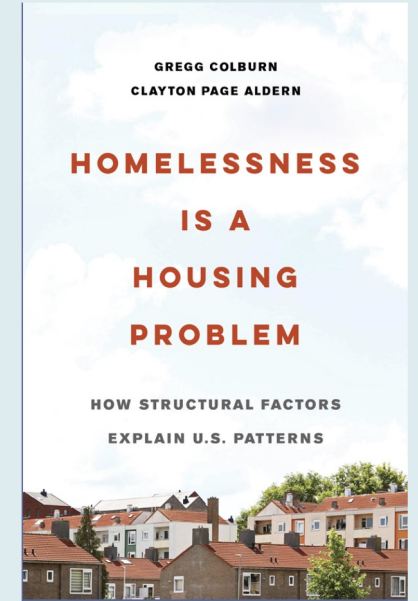
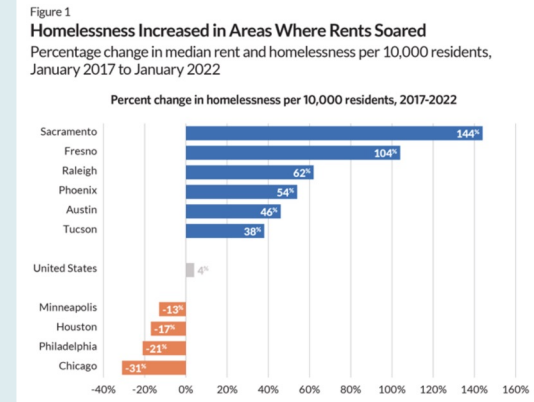


Growing impacts on communities

Homelessness is a Housing Problem, Not a Problem of Unhousable People

Homelessness is a housing problem

Housing affordability and supply, not local political context, substance use, mental illness, poverty, climate, or availability of services account for regional variation in homelessness.



1. Colburn, G., & Aldern, C. P. (2022). *Homelessness is a housing problem: How structural factors explain US patterns*. Univ of California Press.
2. <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2023/08/22/how-housing-costs-drive-levels-of-homelessness>
3. Kushel, M., & Moore, T. (2023). *Towards a New Understanding: The California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness*.

VERMONT

#20*

In **Vermont**, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is **\$1,328**. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities — without paying more than 30% of income on housing — a household must earn **\$4,426** monthly or **\$53,117** annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into an hourly Housing Wage of:

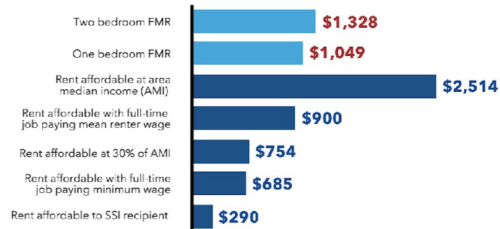
\$25.54
PER HOUR
STATE HOUSING
WAGE

FACTS ABOUT VERMONT:

STATE FACTS	
Minimum Wage	\$13.18
Average Renter Wage	\$17.30
2-Bedroom Housing Wage	\$25.54
Number of Renter Households	73,362
Percent Renters	28%

MOST EXPENSIVE AREAS	HOUSING WAGE
Burlington-South Burlington MSA	\$31.06
Washington County	\$24.13
Addison County	\$22.92
Lamoille County	\$22.27
Windham County	\$22.12

78 Work Hours Per Week At Minimum Wage To Afford a 2-Bedroom Rental Home (at FMR)	61 Work Hours Per Week At Minimum Wage To Afford a 1-Bedroom Rental Home (at FMR)
1.9 Number of Full-Time Jobs At Minimum Wage To Afford a 2-Bedroom Rental Home (at FMR)	1.5 Number of Full-Time Jobs At Minimum Wage To Afford a 1-Bedroom Rental Home (at FMR)



MSA = Metropolitan Statistical Area; HMA = HUD Metro FMR Area.
* Ranked from Highest to Lowest 2-Bedroom Housing Wage. Includes District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Case Manager

Central Vermont Council on Aging
Barre, VT 05641

Typically responds within 5 days

\$24 - \$26 an hour Full-time +1 Monday to Friday +2

Easily apply

- The successful applicant will also have the ability to work independently and as part of a team, reliable transportation, experience with data entry and a working knowledge of MS Office, Excel, Word...

Active 9 days ago

New Urgently hiring

Preschool Teacher

Vermont Early Childhood Education LLC
Saint Albans, VT 05478

\$20 - \$25 an hour Full-time +1 10 to 40 hours per week

Monday to Friday +1

Easily apply

- Collaborate with other teachers to develop age-appropriate curriculum.
- Curriculum is teacher developed and based on monthly themes with a strong incorporation...

Posted 1 day ago

Pharmacy Technician

CVS Health
Barre, VT

\$16 - \$24 an hour Full-time

- The Pharmacy Technician position provides individuals with an opportunity to work in a leading retail pharmacy company and in a role that positively impacts the...

Posted 30+ days ago · More...

View similar jobs with this employer

Part Time/Per Diem Home Health Aide

B BAYADA Home Health Care [★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ 3,588 reviews](#)

White River Junction, VT

\$18 an hour - Part-time, Full-time, Per diem

Apply now



Escalating and Accumulating Health Impacts

Strong base of evidence linking homelessness and housing insecurity to a broad range of adverse health conditions, including premature death, across the lifespan.^{1,2}

Unsheltered homelessness and involuntary displacement amplify health impacts.^{3,4}

“And I really need to be inside because you know my health would just just go downhill fast. Before I was lucky enough to stay here. I was in my car and my doctor said that if I didn't get inside that I was gonna die. So then somehow I get into this program and I'm so thankful because, you know, I wouldn't be here if it weren't for this program.”

55-year-old female motel resident, Upper Valley



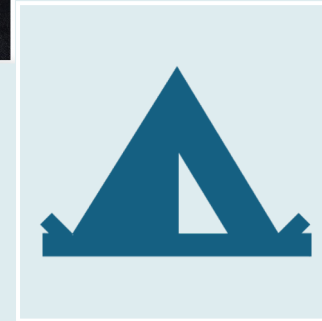
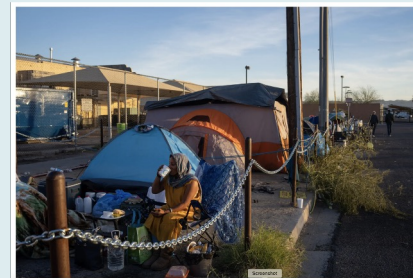
1. “Housing And Health: An Overview Of The Literature.” Project HOPE, June 7, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hpb20180313.396577>.
2. Cawley, Caroline, Hemal K. Kanzaria, Barry Zevin, Kelly M. Doran, Margot Kushel, and Maria C. Raven. “Mortality Among People Experiencing Homelessness in San Francisco During the COVID-19 Pandemic.” JAMA Network Open 5, no. 3 (March 10, 2022): e221870. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.1870>.
3. Jessica Richards and Randall Kuhn, “Unsheltered Homelessness and Health: A Literature Review,” AJPM Focus 2, no. 1 (October 29, 2022): 100043, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.focus.2022.100043>.
4. Barocas, Joshua A., Samantha K. Nall, Sarah Axelrath, Courtney Pladsen, Alaina Boyer, Alex H. Kral, Ashley A. Meehan, et al. “Population-Level Health Effects of Involuntary Displacement of People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness Who Inject Drugs in US Cities.” JAMA, April 10, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2023.4800>.

Displacement of Impacts and Costs



Sheltered Homelessness

Homelessness budget and funding streams



Unsheltered Homelessness

Municipalities
Health Systems
Criminal Justice Systems
Schools
Public services

The "frequent fliers" account for the running red ink in the hospital's finances. Parkland needed to do something about them, and beginning in 2015 it did. That year, the Parkland Health and Hospital System christened a new \$1.3 billion hospital, a 17-story glass-and-steel behemoth, shiny on the outside and quiet on the inside, funded by municipal bonds and donations from local oil zillionaires. It also launched an innovative new initiative that would reset the hospital's ledger by creating a safety net for the city's most vulnerable citizens.

The New York Times

Number of Homeless Students Rises to New High, Report Says

The report found that more than 1.5 million public school students experienced homelessness in the 2017-18 school year, the highest in more than a dozen years.

A Person Trapped in the Homelessness-Jail Cycle Costs Denver Nearly \$4,000 in Criminal Justice-Related Costs over 90 Days

Cost and number of justice system interactions for one person experiencing long-term homelessness in Denver in 2016

\$80 1 jail stay	\$430 1 arrest	\$2,700 18 other police contacts
\$700 4 citations		

Source: Sarah Gillespie, Benjamin Chartoff, Devlin Hanson, and Mary K. Cunningham, "The first step toward breaking the homelessness-jail cycle," *Urban Wire* (blog), Urban Institute, May 18, 2016, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/first-step-toward-breaking-homelessness-jail-cycle>.
Notes: These data do not represent actual citations, arrests, jail stays, or other police contacts. They are simulated to match the distribution of actual interactions for a person experiencing chronic, or long-term, homelessness cycling in and out of jail. Costs are based on estimates provided by Denver for the average cost of one citation (\$175), arrest (\$430), jail stay (\$80),

URBAN INSTITUTE

Costs of Homelessness

Homelessness imposes steep costs and impacts on communities

Cost of unsheltered homeless—upwards of \$30,000 per year.^{1,2,3,4}

Costs absorbed by health system, schools, criminal justice system, public services, and municipalities.

Unsheltered homelessness is resource intensive for communities: 90% of costs absorbed by municipalities;⁵ most costs not supported by HUD funding

1. https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Ending_Chronic_Homelessness_in_2017.pdf
2. “Ending Chronic Homelessness Saves Taxpayers Monday,” Policy Brief, National Coalition to End Homelessness, <https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Cost-Savings-from-PSH.pdf>.
3. Salit, Sharon A., Evelyn M. Kuhn, Arthur J. Hartz, Jade M. Vu, and Andrew L. Mosso. “Hospitalization Costs Associated with Homelessness in New York City.” *New England Journal of Medicine* 338, no. 24 (June 11, 1998): 1734–40. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJM199806113382406>.
4. “The Cost of Long-Term Homelessness in Florida,” Rethink Homelessness, 2014. <https://shnny.org/uploads/Florida-Homelessness-Report-2014.pdf>
5. HUD, Exploring Homelessness Among People Living in Encampments, 2021. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/Exploring-Homelessness-Among-People.html>

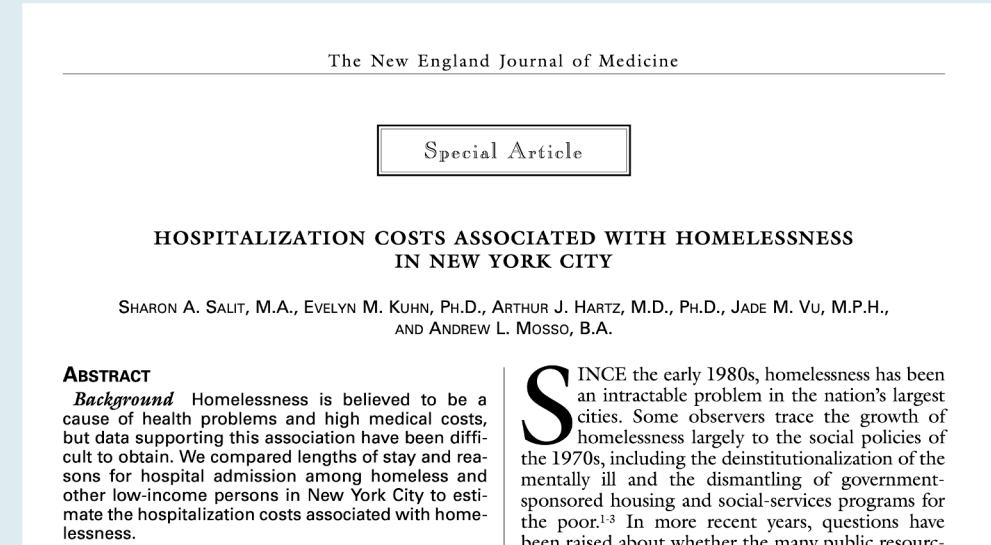
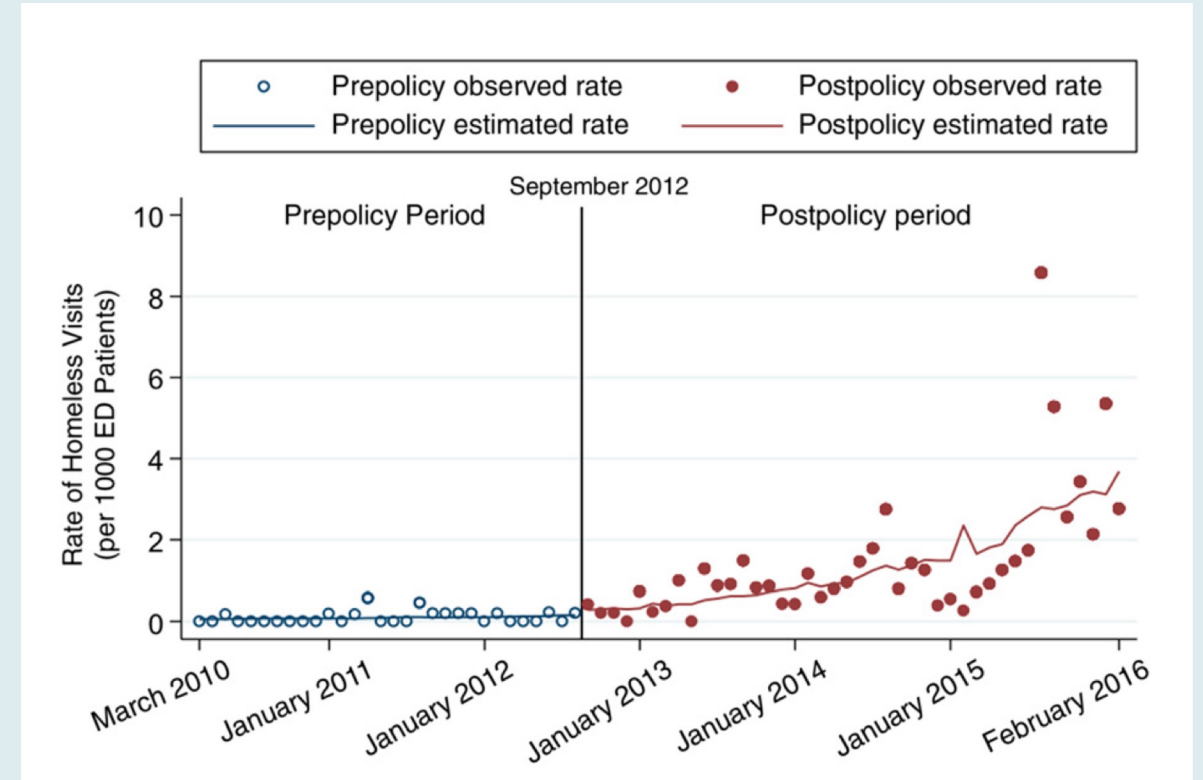
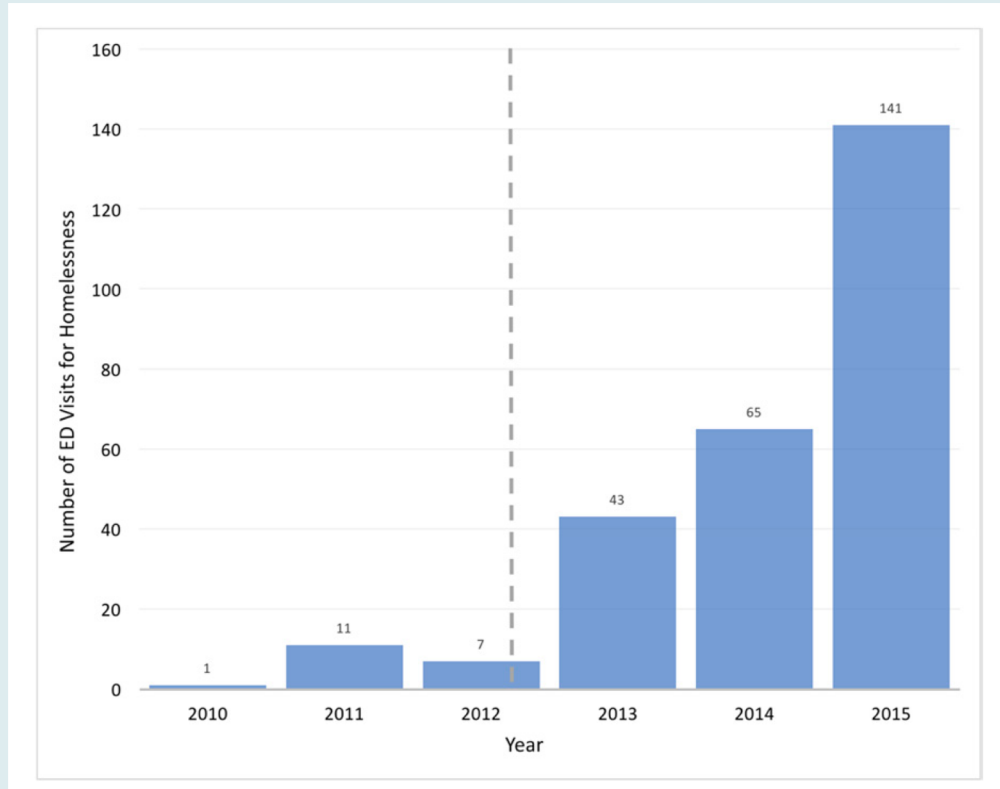


Exhibit 6-1. Total costs and cost per capita of encampment-related expenditures by city, FY 2019

	Total spending on encampment activities	Population	Cost per capita
San Jose	\$ 8,557,000	1,035,317	\$ 8.27
Tacoma	\$ 3,905,000	213,418	\$ 18.30
Chicago	\$ 3,572,000	2,716,450	\$ 1.31
Houston	\$ 3,393,000	2,312,717	\$ 1.47

Sources: City cost data; U.S. Census

Taxing Systems of Care



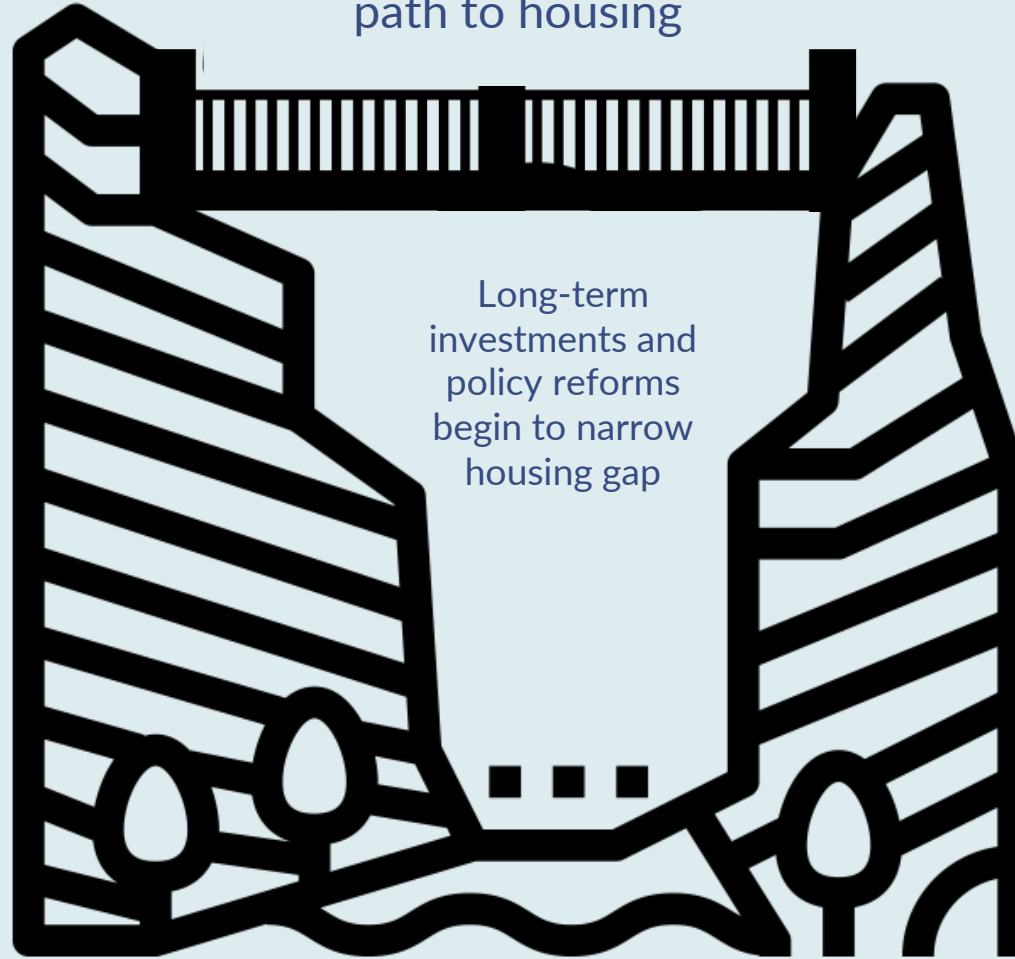
1. Stewart, Amanda M., Mia M. Kanak, Alana M. Gerald, Amir A. Kimia, Assaf Landschaft, Megan T. Sandel, and Lois K. Lee. "Pediatric Emergency Department Visits for Homelessness After Shelter Eligibility Policy Change." *Pediatrics* 142, no. 5 (November 1, 2018): e20181224. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-1224>.

Robust homelessness prevention prevents many from falling into homelessness



Stable interim options prevents cascade of adverse solutions and path to housing

Barriers to re-entry into housing eliminated



Created by Becris from Noun Project

Where We Need to Go

Progress is Possible

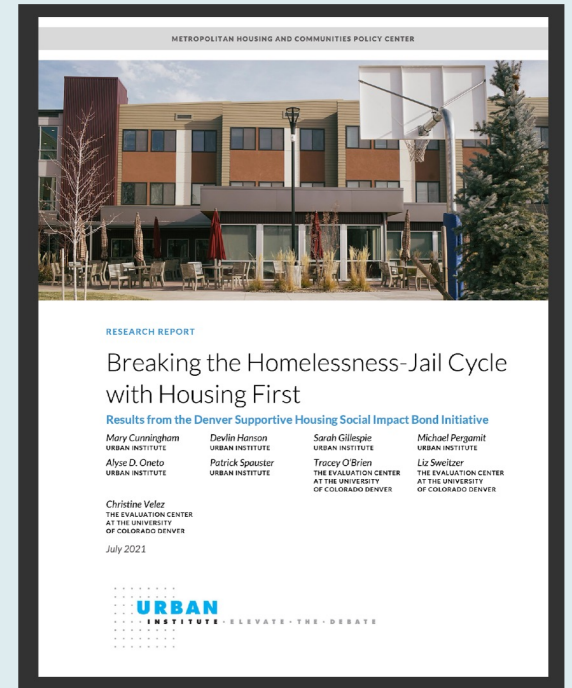
Proven Solutions

Decades of research show that the vast majority of people experiencing homelessness, including those with severe mental illness, significant encounters with the criminal justice system, and substance use disorder, can be successfully housed using a Housing First approach.

Many commonly employed approaches not backed by evidence.

Real World Progress

Cities and institutions employing evidence-based solutions at scale—Houston, Milwaukee, Veterans' Administration—making progress.



Housing First: What Is It?



Programmatic Approach

- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams



Philosophical Orientation

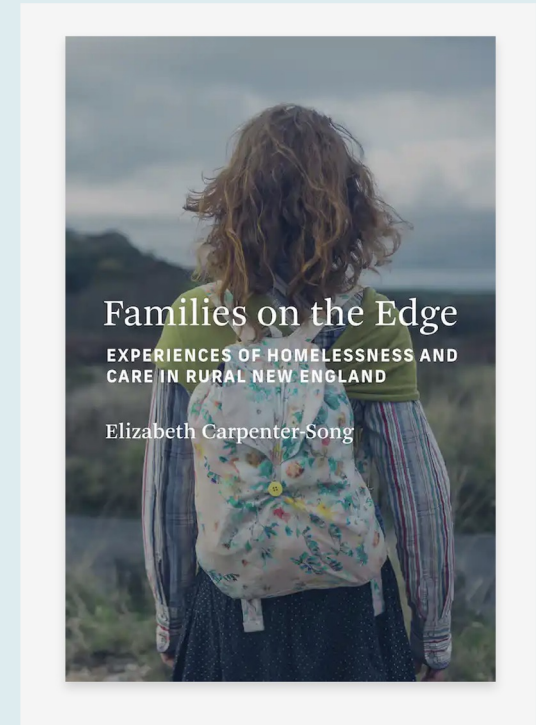
Systemwide orientation that includes but is not limited to the following principles:

- Immediate access to housing without housing readiness requirements
- Consumer choice and self-determination
- Individualized, client-driven, voluntary supports and services
- Adaptable to the needs of specific groups, including families and youth.

Evidence on Supportive Services

Evidence on services is more mixed

Research suggests that some supportive services may not contribute meaningfully to housing outcomes for people exiting homelessness and, under some circumstances, undermine tenancy and housing stability.^{1,2}



Families on the Edge: “Attending closely to lived experience illuminates...how engaging in services may be experienced as intrusive, transforming into unwelcome and potentially harmful forms of surveillance.”³

1. Marybeth Shinn and Jill Khadduri, *In the Midst of Plenty: Homelessness and What to Do about It*, Contemporary Social Issues (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2020).
2. Liz McGrath and Nancy Pistrang, “Policeman or Friend? Dilemmas in Working with Homeless Young People in the United Kingdom,” *Journal of Social Issues* 63, no. 3 (September 2007): 589–606, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2007.00525.x>.
3. Elizabeth Carpenter-Song, *Families on the Edge: Experiences of Homelessness and Care in Rural New England* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2023).

Interim Solutions: What Works?

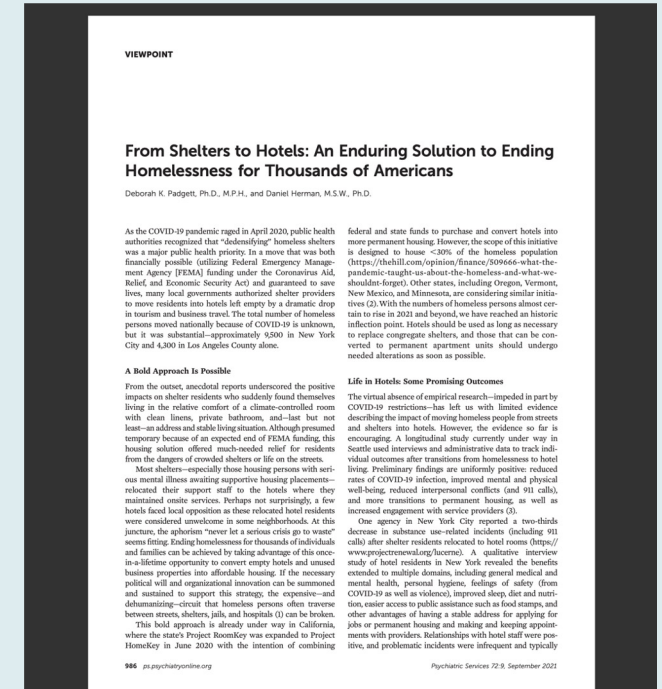
Pandemic offered a natural policy experiment on the use of non-congregate shelter.

Growing body of evidence from use of motels in several settings on superiority of non-congregate shelter over congregate shelter.

Consistent with findings from local research in Vermont.

“Hotels should be used as long as necessary to replace congregate shelters, and those that can be converted to permanent apartment units should undergo needed alterations as soon as possible” (Padgett and Herman 2021).

1. Padgett, Deborah K., and Daniel Herman. “From Shelters to Hotels: An Enduring Solution to Ending Homelessness for Thousands of Americans.” *Psychiatric Services* 72, no. 9 (September 1, 2021): 986–87. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.202100170>.



Recommendations

1. Adopt statewide Housing First strategy
2. Develop comprehensive plan with Specific, Measurable Targets
3. Invest in statewide infrastructure for Housing First Practice of Permanent Supportive Housing
4. Establish new entity to address homelessness
5. Make Zero Unsheltered Homelessness Goal Set goal of preventing and ultimately eliminating unsheltered homelessness.

Framework for Interim Housing

Pathway to Permanent Housing: Reimagine emergency housing as stable, unidirectional, path to permanent housing. Eliminate periods of ineligibility.

Housing First Orientation: Design with low barriers to entry, harm reduction orientation, choice and self-determination in housing and services.

Non-Congregate Shelter: Prioritize non-congregate options in all interim housing investments.

Disability Justice: Use the Americans with Disability Act definition of disability. Address barriers to accessing and maintaining both interim and permanent housing for unhoused Vermonters with disabilities.