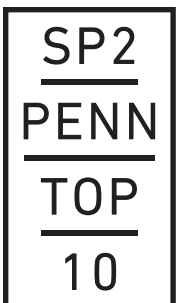


WE CAN END HOMELESSNESS

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During the peak of homelessness activism in the early 1990s, research found that homelessness was much more common than previously thought. Since then, through the support of several presidential administrations and the determination of federal agencies, policy and practice innovations have led to an overall decline in homelessness. Policy makers are embracing new evidence-based programs and turning away from long-standing practices that were based on inaccurate, stereotypical understandings of homelessness.

The recent claim of an elimination of chronic homelessness among veterans in cities like New Orleans, Phoenix and Salt Lake City has demonstrated that concerted efforts by communities and the federal government can make a lasting impact on this once-seemingly intractable social problem. These cities have proven that it is possible for the United States to end homelessness among veterans and non-veterans once and for all.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Ending homelessness in the United States is possible and within reach. The field has identified two forms of homelessness—crisis homelessness and chronic homelessness—and has proven solutions to address both forms.

Crisis homelessness is a result of a short-term economic or social crisis. Research indicates that 80% to 85% of adults and families who use shelters are experiencing this short-term homelessness (60-90 days). Rapid rehousing stabilization is an effective intervention against this.

Chronic homelessness is experienced frequently and can last for years. Adults who are chronically homeless have much higher rates of behavioral health problems and disabilities, and more complex social support needs. For this population, permanent supportive housing (PSH) has been proven to be an effective solution.

With further strategic investments, these solutions can be implemented across the country and homelessness can become a thing of the past.

WHY IS THIS ISSUE IMPORTANT?

- 1.6 million people experience homelessness in the U.S. each year
- About 250,000 homeless adults live unsheltered on any given night, effectively living outdoors
- About 135,000 families experience homelessness annually
- About 80,000 people experience chronic homelessness on a given day
- Almost 50% of the chronic homeless population are over the age of 50
- Homeless adults over the age of 55 have a life expectancy of 64 years

ON THE HORIZON: EXPANDING SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

The federal government must continue to draw from the best of these evidence-based practices and commit more resources to end homelessness. The successes that have been achieved demonstrate that combining knowledge from research, innovations from the field, insights from the people who use these programs and data-driven decision-making leads to programs that work to effectively end homelessness. The new President in 2016 will have the chance to make a major difference in the lives of Americans at risk of homelessness.