Grand Challenges for Social Work

End Homelessness

Grand Challenges in Social Work, using evidence to promote social justice and well-being

The Issue

Homelessness and housing instability is a substantial problem that afflicts a diverse group of subpopulations in the United States. During the course of a year, nearly 1.5 million Americans experience homelessness for at least one night. Despite decades of efforts to stem the tide, the scope and persistence of homelessness in the U.S. has severe and lasting effects on the health and well-being of those affected.

Societal Goal

With a focused yet reimagined approach to the issue that combines evidence, resources, innovative thinking, and political will, we can reduce the scope of homelessness in the United States as well as the risk factors such as housing and income instability that contribute to the issue.

A Decade of Work

- Integrate data from PIT, HMIS, school districts and other sources such as foster care and healthcare systems to investigate the interconnected aspects and risk factors of homelessness.
- Expand access to affordable housing stock, housing subsidies, and housing choice vouchers.
- Link evidence-based psychosocial interventions to housing assistance programs for those in need.
- Promote policy change to address risk factors that increase likelihood of homelessness such as minimum wage, income disability benefits, and affordable housing.
- Adapt housing-led interventions with proven effective to new populations experiencing homelessness.
- Create innovative funding strategies that reform existing structures while also seeking new funding from sectors that previously have not been engaged.

End Homelessness

Resources

- Henwood, B. F., Wenzel, S., Mangano, P. F., Hombs, M., Padgett, D., Byrne, T., ... Uretsky, M. (2015). *The grand challenge of ending homelessness* (Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative Working Paper No. 9). Cleveland, OH: American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare.
- Padgett, D. K., Henwood, B. F., & Culhane, D. P. (2016, September). *Policy recommendations for meeting the Grand Challenge to End Homelessness* (Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative Policy Brief No. 6). Cleveland, OH: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare.
- Padgett, D.K., Henwood, B.F. & Tsemberis, S. (2016). *Housing First: Ending homelessness, transforming systems and changing lives.* New York: Oxford Press.
- Websites:
  - http://aaswsw.org/grand-challenges-initiative/12-challenges/end-homelessness/
  - https://www.gc2eh.org/

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Get involved!

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