

End Homelessness

A Grand Challenge for Social Work

The Grand Challenge to **End Homelessness** boldly aspires to ensure that everyone has stable housing in the United States, where approximately 1.5 million people are homeless each year.¹ Translating rigorous research into evidence-based interventions and informed political advocacy, this Grand Challenge aims to address homelessness both directly and indirectly by expanding housing options and creating greater income stability. In 2020, in the midst of a pandemic-induced recession, this Grand Challenge took on additional urgency as cities and states have begun to lift their eviction moratoria.

During the past five years, members of the Grand Challenge network have published prolifically, lectured widely, and advocated energetically for this cause. Against the backdrop of rising homelessness rates in major cities, they have articulated detailed policy recommendations for the incoming administration. Within their field, they have updated their curricula in line with the principles of Housing First and outside their field, they have addressed common misconceptions about homelessness.

¹U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2015)

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO END HOMELESSNESS

1

Expand investment in affordable housing through existing and new revenue sources.

2

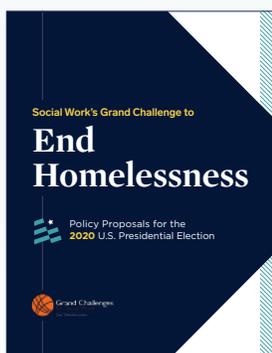
Shift funds from transitional emergency programs to lasting solutions such as rental vouchers and permanent supportive housing for those with disabilities.

3

Prevent homelessness or ensure its brevity by supporting rapid re-housing and time-limited rental assistance.

4

Ensure that the guiding principles of housing first (low barriers to housing, harm reduction, client-centered services) form the cornerstone of homeless services for adults, families, and youths.



From *End Homelessness: Policy Proposals for the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election, 2020*, available at the [End Homelessness website](#).

Network Leadership

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LOOKING BACK

Over the past five years, **End Homelessness** Grand Challenge network members and their colleagues have:

- **Advocated** for Maryland's Ending Youth Homelessness Act, which creates a grant program to fund housing and supportive services for unaccompanied homeless youth and those at risk of homelessness and against HUD's [Making Affordable Housing Work Act](#)
- **Compiled** a [series of essays](#) on homelessness by policy experts. Published in advance of the 2020 election to inform candidates of possible solutions to the U.S. housing crisis, the authors call for:
 1. **Expanding** investment in affordable housing
 2. **Supporting** rapid re-housing and time-limited rental assistance
 3. **Shifting** funds from transitional emergency programs to rental vouchers and permanent supportive housing
 4. **Designing** homeless services around the principles of Housing First
- **Published** a [chapter](#), "Homelessness in Los Angeles and New York City: A Tale of Two Cities," and a [book](#), "Housing First: Ending Homelessness, Transforming Systems and Changing Lives"
- **Presented** widely on the subject, including at the University of Denver's Science for Action series, where Benjamin Henwood delivered the [keynote address](#), "Shouldn't Ending Homelessness be the Easy Part?" and at the National Symposium on Solutions to End Youth Homelessness, where Deborah Padgett led a [session](#) on "Implementing Community Driven Research and Evaluation in Youth Programs"
- **Testified** in lawsuits aiming to improve homeless services and reduce police harassment in Miami, Los Angeles, and Washington, DC
- **Developed** a [curricular guide](#) for teachers and students of social work around ending homelessness with the National Center for Excellence in Homeless Services and the Council on Social Work Education
- **Conducted** a [research survey](#) with the National Center for Excellence in Homeless Services to identify ongoing research and interested faculty, and to connect researchers across institutions
- **Spoken out** against myths of homelessness surrounding crime, substance use, and [service resistance](#) in such outlets as [Radio Health Journal](#) and [The New York Times](#)
- **Contributed** to a [special edition](#) of the Journal of Social Work Education, featuring 13 articles on how various social work programs are updating their pedagogy in line with the movement to end homelessness
- **Participated** in the Los Angeles Homeless Count, which directed \$110 million in HUD funding to the county in 2018
- **Responded** to COVID-19 by [commenting](#) on and [researching](#) the implications of the pandemic for homelessness and the housing crisis more generally

LOOKING AHEAD

Over the next five years, network members are committed to **continuing** to advocate for the recommendations outlined in the original policy brief and expanded upon in *End Homelessness: Policy Proposals for the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election*, including:

- **Expand** access to housing subsidies, including Housing Choice Vouchers
- **Ensure** that evidence-based psychosocial interventions accompany housing assistance
- **Develop** and **evaluate** housing-led interventions for specific populations including youth, older people, and veterans

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