

LEARNING TOUR BRIEF #10

Transforming Our Approaches to Addressing Homelessness

OVERVIEW AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Providing housing and services to the homeless is a cost-effective way to address the escalating issue of homelessness throughout the nation. Tour [Connections Housing](#), an exemplary program that incorporates joint services from dozens of community partners to provide a comprehensive and coordinated resource for San Diego's downtown homeless population. Join a conversation with key leaders in this area and learn how communities and foundations can form innovative and impactful partnerships with collaborative funding efforts and effective place-based strategies to end homelessness.

As you participate in this learning tour, you'll have chance to:

- Learn how a national movement on ending homelessness connects to innovative local models
- Understand the history and process of aligning resources and partners across philanthropy, business, healthcare providers, community organizations, and government that is guiding San Diego's efforts to end homelessness
- Study innovative partnership models that the Connections Housing program employs to provide its services and reduce homelessness

LEARNING TOUR AGENDA

Part I: Panel and Discussion – Building Partnerships and a Campaign to End Homelessness

Part II: Interactive Tour – Supporting and Serving the Homeless with Best Practices

Part III: Viewing of the *Campaign to End Homelessness in Downtown San Diego* "Blitz Week" video; lunch, informal discussion, and networking

(Please note Part I and Part II will happen simultaneously, with participants switching sessions)

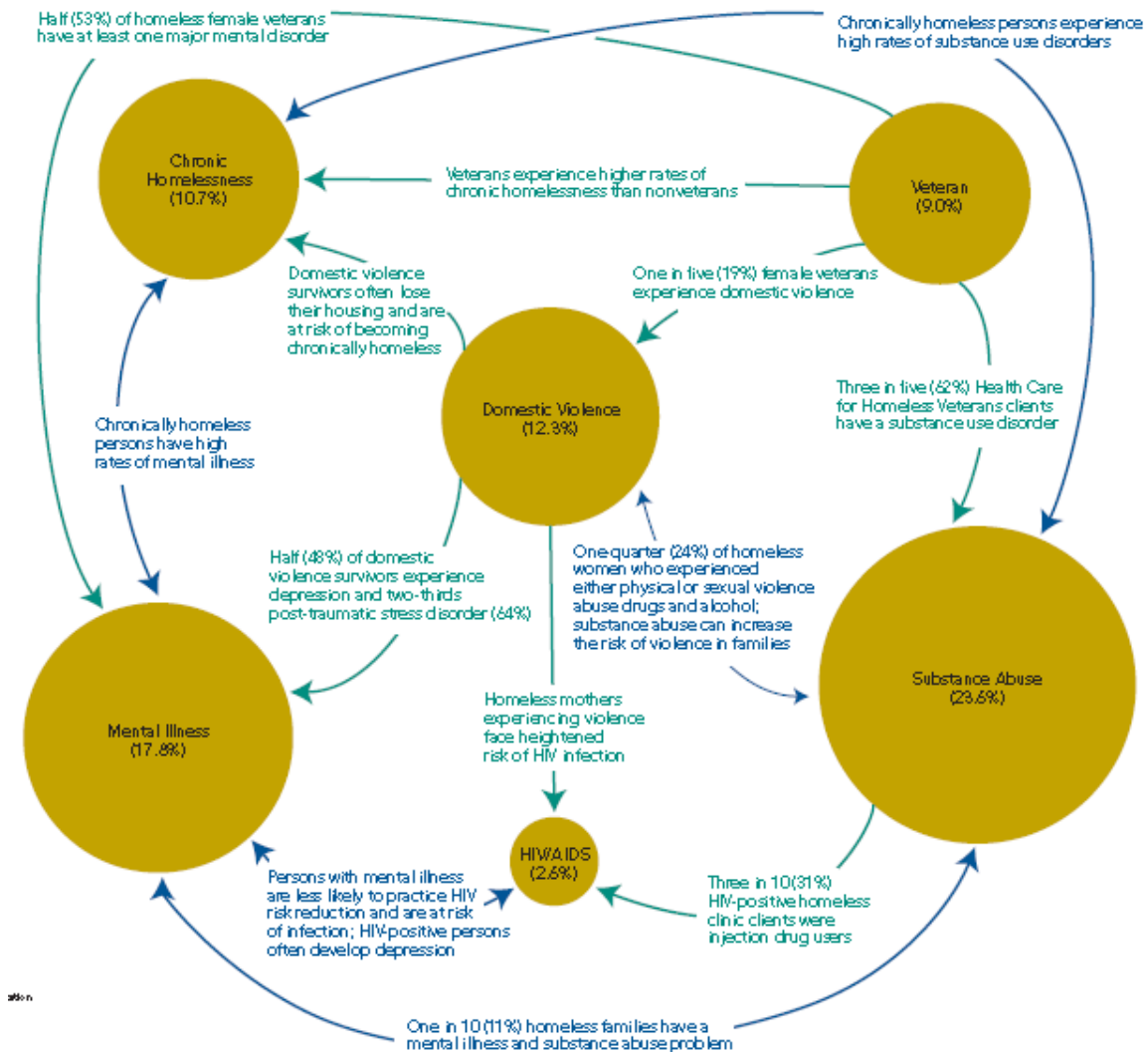
ISSUE STATEMENT

As many as 3.5 million Americans are homeless each year. Of these, more than 1 million are children and on any given night, more than 300,000 children are homeless.

While often the impression can be that the homeless are primarily the individuals seen living on the streets in the downtown areas of our cities, the fact is that more than half the homeless are families with children. The vast majority of these have been thrust into homelessness by a life altering event or series of events that were unexpected and unplanned for. Contrary to the belief that homelessness is primarily the result of major traumatic events or physical and mental disabilities, homelessness is caused by tragic life occurrences like the loss of loved ones, job loss, domestic violence, divorce, and family disputes. Today, the rapid, unexpected loss of jobs and resultant foreclosures has caused great dislocation among families and has dramatically added to the number of people without a roof over their heads.



Interconnectedness of Homelessness Populations

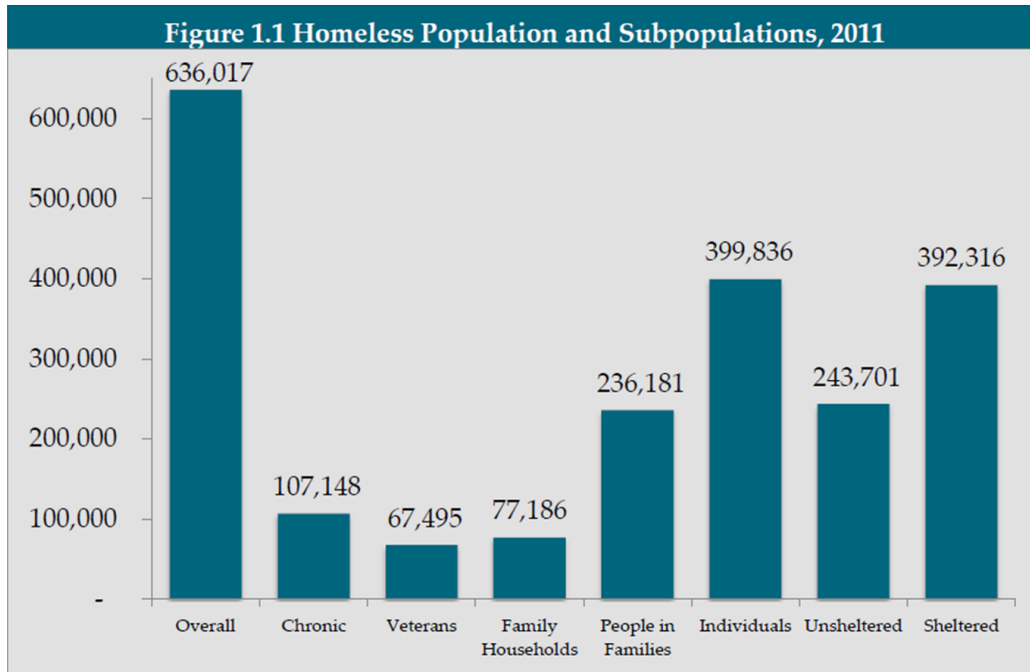


NATIONAL TRENDS

From 2011 to 2012, the nation's homeless population decreased by 0.4% or about 2,235 people. There was a decrease in all homeless subpopulations with the exception of persons in families. The largest decreases were 6.8% among individuals identified as chronically homeless and 7.2% among veterans. The decreases in chronic and veteran homelessness indicate that, with federal, state, and local investment in strategies proven to end homelessness, progress can be made. The ongoing and increased development of permanent supportive housing, a proven solution to ending homelessness for people with disabilities, is bringing down chronic and veteran homelessness numbers in communities across the country. Emphasis needs to be placed on creating more affordable housing and strengthening the safety net to prevent homelessness. Federal assistance that was previously available to fill some of those gaps—through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP)—has been depleted and not replaced.

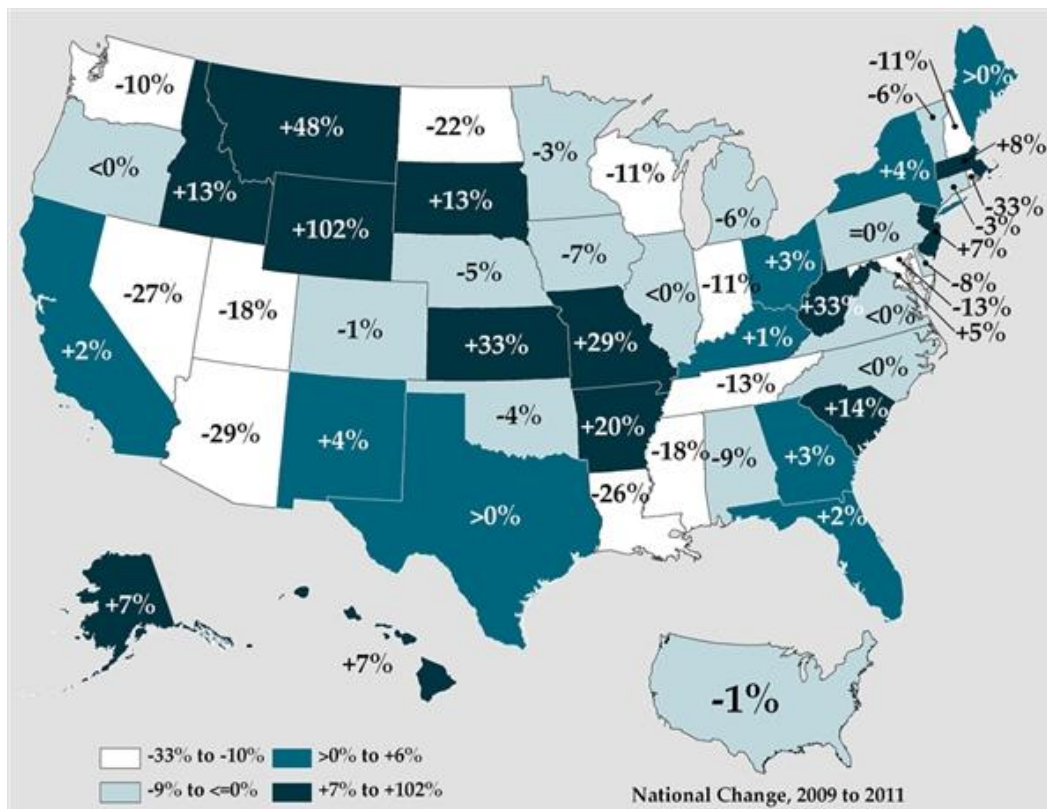
- There are 633,782 people experiencing homelessness on any given night in the United States. Of that number, 239,403 are people in families, and 394,379 are individuals
- Slightly fewer than 16% of the homeless population is considered “chronically homeless” and about 13% of homeless adults – 62,619 – are veterans. These numbers come from point-in-time, which are conducted, community by community, on a single night in January every other year
- A majority of people identified as homeless were staying in emergency shelters or transitional housing, but 38% were unsheltered, living on the streets, or in cars, abandoned buildings, or other places not intended for human habitation.

Since 2007, there has been a 19% decline in chronically homeless single adults. In contrast, family homelessness has *increased* by more than 13% over the same period. The number of homeless school-aged children surpassed 1 million for the first time during the 2011-12 school year — a 57% increase since 2006-07.



Note: subpopulation data do not equal the overall homeless population number. This is because people could be counted as part of more than one subpopulation (e.g. a person could be an unsheltered, chronic, veteran individual). Further, family households are a separate measure as a household is comprised of numerous people (e.g. at least one adult and at least one child).

Changes in Homeless Populations



ECONOMIC IMPACT

Since homelessness is essentially caused by the inability of households to pay for housing, the National Alliance of Homelessness examined a variety of economic and housing indicators that affect people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

- Nationally, median household income decreased by 1.3% between 2010 and 2011, from \$51,144 to \$50,502
- Between 2010 and 2011, the national poverty rate increased from 15.3% to 15.9%; representing an almost 5% increase in the number of people living in poverty; more than 48 million people were living in poverty in 2011
- Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 38 reported an increase in the fair market rent between 2010 and 2011. Nationally, the average fair market rent for a two-bedroom housing unit increased by 1.5%
- In 2011, more than 6.5 million households were spending more than 50% of their income for housing expenses, which was a 5.5% increase from 2010.

Philip Mangano, the former homelessness policy czar under President George W. Bush, used data from 65 cities – of all different sizes and demographics – to estimate the cost of keeping people on the street. The cost added up to between \$35,000 and \$150,000 per person per year. Current HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan has also used that number when describing costs for homelessness. Studies have shown that providing people experiencing chronic homelessness with permanent supportive housing (permanent housing coupled with supportive services) saves taxpayers money.

Economic Impact – San Diego

- There were approximately 850 living on the streets in San Diego in 2012
- The estimated annual costs associated with ER visits, inpatient hospitalizations, and nights in jail was \$36,624 per person, which adds up to almost \$38 million per year.
- Permanent supportive housing costs approximately \$27,000 per person per year in San Diego for those with the most acute needs of housing and service supports – if unsheltered homeless persons were provided with permanent supportive housing, this would equate to millions of dollars of savings.
- Research shows an average of 60% reduction in healthcare costs after one year of housing with services.

HOW IS THE SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY DEALING WITH THIS ISSUE?

The Campaign to End Homelessness in Downtown San Diego is a collaborative funding effort and an effective place-based strategy to end homelessness in downtown San Diego.

Launched in December 2009, the Campaign is a part of the National 100,000 Homes Campaign that has housed over 50,000 people since July 2010, and is guided by a local Leadership Team with more than 60 members, including key partners from:

- The U.S Department of Veteran Affairs San Diego Healthcare System
- The County of San Diego and its Health and Human Services Agency
- The City of San Diego and its two agencies: the San Diego Housing Commission and Civic San Diego
- LeSar Development Consultants, the Campaign initiator and neutral convener;
- United Way of San Diego, the County's regional leadership entity on ending homelessness; and
- Individual and corporate donors, downtown business leaders, elected officials, public safety officers, hospitals and health clinics, local universities, philanthropy, advocates for veterans, and experts in affordable housing, supportive services, homelessness, and workforce development.

The Campaign's mission is to end homelessness downtown with the strategy of moving the most vulnerable members of the community off the streets and into permanent affordable housing and linking them to rental assistance and supportive services. This is a nationally proven strategy for the homeless to leave the streets, achieve housing stability, and become integrated members of San Diego's community.

Phase 1 of the Campaign was a successful pilot program where 148 homeless people achieved housing stability. In just 15 months, this phase housed approximately 15% of the downtown street homeless and was financed primarily with local public resources.



Phase 2 of the Campaign institutionalized efforts and housed an additional 92 homeless persons in just three days. This phase reached full capacity by housing 100 homeless persons in early 2013.

Phase 3 will involve taking these successful strategies to scale to completely end homelessness for the remaining people that live on the streets of San Diego. The Campaign aspires to reach this goal by 2015.

Building on the momentum and political will to end homelessness San Diego sought to establish an integrated service and residential community designed to reduce street homelessness in the downtown neighborhoods by helping people who are living on the street move into permanent housing. This culminated in the development and opening of Connections Housing. Virtually every resource an individual needs to break the cycle of homelessness is available on-site at Connections Housing, including 73 permanent supportive housing units, 16 special needs single room occupancy units, 134 interim housing beds, a one-stop social services center and a community health clinic. Connections Housing is one part of downtown's larger strategy to end homelessness.

In 2008, the San Diego City Council, with the support of the Mayor, the San Diego Housing Commission, and CCDC (now Civic San Diego) initiated a vision for a one-stop homeless service center. In 2010, a volunteer citizen's panel, along with the approval of the San Diego City Council, selected PATH as the lead agency for the project (see below). Connections Housing is a partnership which brings a variety of agencies together under one roof to meet the many needs of the downtown homeless population. For a list of funders for this project, please read the accompanying Issue Brief on homelessness.

The total cost to develop Connections Housing was \$38 million for the entire multi-purpose facility. The combined operating budget for the PATH Depot, Family Health Center, 150 interim housing beds, and 73 permanent supportive housing units is approximately \$3.7 million annually. It is estimated that 60-100 people will utilize the PATH Depot each day and 50-100 patients will be served daily at the health clinic, in addition to the housing.

This program is using best practices from San Diego and around the country. This includes linking health care to federal housing vouchers provided by the San Diego Housing Commission, rapid re-housing, strategic street outreach, and homeless prevention. It is also a coordinated and collaborative service system that removes many obstacles that typically create barriers to receiving services. The most recent number of homeless individuals in San Diego is 8,879 in 2013 (decrease of 7.9% from 2012).

[PATH](#) is a family of agencies working together to end homelessness for individuals, families, and communities in more than 60 cities throughout Southern California. PATH strives to do this by prioritizing housing while providing customized supportive services for people in need. Agencies each address the homelessness issue in a different way—supportive services, permanent housing development, support for homeless families, and community engagement—all of which ultimately help the people we serve make it home.

ARE THERE MORE RESOURCES I CAN ACCESS ON THIS?

The Ten Essentials is a guide to help communities identify effective permanent solutions to homelessness put together by the National Association to End Homelessness:

1. *Plan:* Devise a plan of action. While planning, it is important to have representatives and input from all the groups affected by this social issue: government officials, business leaders, community activists, and the like.
2. *Data:* Understand the problem. With homelessness, that can be a tall order, as the social problem is influenced by the economy, geography, transportation, and a host of other elements. Luckily, most communities conduct a biannual point-in-time census and have a Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS), required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
3. *Emergency Prevention:* Many existing social programs connect vulnerable populations with emergency services, temporary cash assistance, and case management. Consider ways to integrate with these existing systems or adopt your own.
4. *Systems Prevention:* Many people who fall into homelessness do so after release from state-run institutions, including jail and the foster care system. Still others come to homelessness from mental health programs and other medical care facilities. By creating a clear path to housing from those institutions—in the form of case management, access to services, or housing assistance programs—we can reduce the role that state-run institutions play in creating homelessness.
5. *Outreach:* An important role in ending homelessness is outreach to people experiencing homelessness. When



considering outreach efforts, it's important to understand that many people living on the streets exhibit mental illness, substance addiction, and other negative behavior patterns. As such, it's important to consider low-demand housing that does not mandate sobriety or treatment.

6. *Shorten Homelessness*: A successful homeless assistance program not only works to end homelessness, but minimizes the length of stay in shelter and reduces repeat homeless episodes. In order to do this, assistance programs must align resources to ensure that families and individuals have access to the services necessary to achieve independence as quickly as possible. This often requires immediate access to housing, home-based case management, and incentives embedded into the homeless assistance system to promote these outcomes.
7. *Rapid Re-Housing*: Navigating the housing market, especially on behalf of clients with lower incomes and higher needs, is a difficult task. A successful homeless assistance program has housing staff that help with just that. Housing locators search local housing markets and build relationships with landlords. Successful program components include incentives to landlords to rent to homeless households, creative uses of housing vouchers and subsidies to help homeless individuals and families afford their rental unit, and links to resources to help clients maintain their housing.
8. *Services*: By and large, homeless individuals can access mainstream programs, including Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, and other existing federal assistance programs. Connecting families and individuals exiting homelessness to these programs is imperative to ensuring their continued independence.
9. *Permanent Housing*: Any plan to end homelessness must incorporate an investment in creating affordable housing. This includes supportive housing, which is permanent housing coupled with supportive services. This is often used for the chronically homeless population – that is, people experiencing long-term or repeated homelessness who also have mental or physical disabilities.
10. *Income*: In order to maintain housing, people exiting homelessness must have income.

REFERENCES:

[100K Homes](#)
[2012 Annual Report/Collateral and Material for the Case Study/Write Up:](#)
[Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#)
[Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness - Philanthropy](#)
[ICPHUSA](#)
[National Association to End Homelessness](#)
[National Coalition for the Homeless](#)
[The Campaign to End Homelessness in Downtown San Diego](#)
[Video - Ending Homelessness](#)

