

## **Bridging Systems to End Family Homelessness: Redefining the Funder's Role**

Ending family homelessness by 2020 is possible, but it will require homeless and mainstream programs and resources to work in new ways. Funders, providers, and advocates must commit to creating a *housing crisis response system* prepared to help more families for shorter periods of time. Chronic and veteran homelessness have made great strides, but each encompasses a relatively finite group. Once all those homeless today are housed, the spigot will get much smaller.

Very low-income families facing housing crises are a larger and more dynamic group, and rehousing those without homes today may not significantly impact those who may lose housing tomorrow. A system for families must respond quickly and effectively to those with nowhere to live *today*, find ways to divert at-risk families from entering homeless programs, and utilize the existing housing market as the primary solution for most homeless families. It must also rely on other mainstream and community programs to provide the specialized or ongoing services that families may need, including employment training, child care, mental health services and others.

For more information see the newly released [Family Connection: Building Systems to End Family Homelessness](#).

As communities set out to create effective family housing crisis response systems, important questions for philanthropy in its four key system-change roles include:

### **Leader/Convener**

- How can philanthropy be leaders in designing and implementing effective responses to family homelessness?
- What tables/processes can philanthropy lead/join that can spearhead these conversations?
- How can philanthropy help other parties to make difficult changes?

### **Capacity Builder**

- How can philanthropy help develop the knowledge base and training needed to help communities change course?
- What kind of tools, information, training or other capacity building is needed to make the vision of an end to family homelessness a reality?

### **Strategic Investor**

- How can philanthropy invest homelessness dollars and non-homelessness resources to support an effective end to family homelessness? What do we have to do differently?
- How can philanthropy hold providers and systems accountable?

### **Advocate**

- What changes at the local, state and federal levels can philanthropy support to end family homelessness?
- What advocacy strategy is needed to direct resources to ending family homelessness?