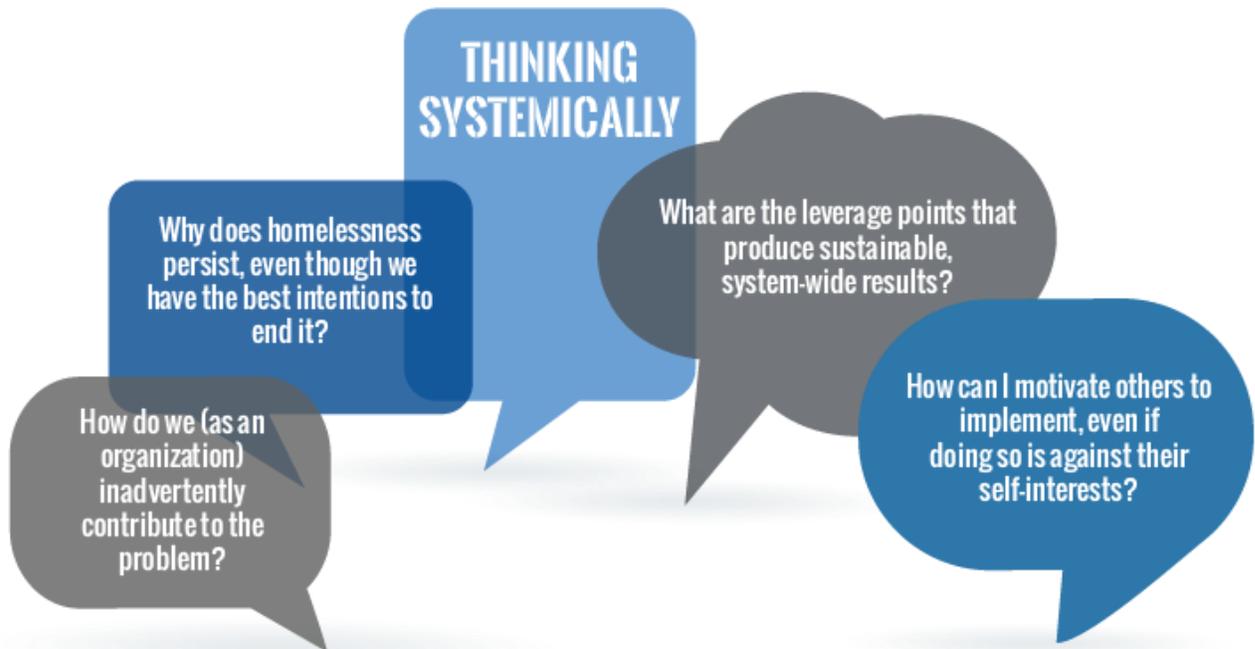


SYSTEMS CHANGE 101

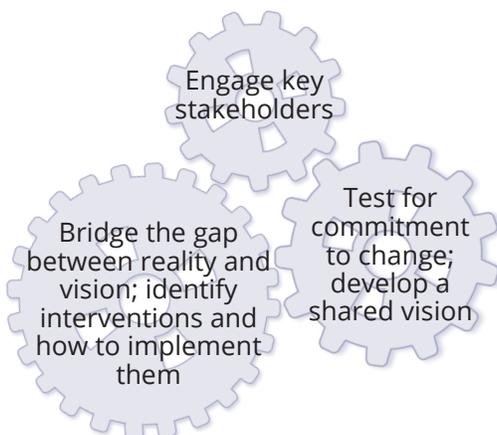
A Systemic Approach to Ending Homelessness

While bringing together diverse stakeholders is a necessary step towards ending homelessness, it is not sufficient. Too often people convene to talk, learn best practices, and plan without making necessary changes in their own behavior. Too often they acknowledge that they know what should be done, but then fail to follow through because doing so may compromise immediate self-interests for funding, recognition, and feeling helpful.

Thinking *and* acting systemically are required to end homelessness.



At the community level, this involves:



At the national level, this involves:



How a Systems Approach Benefits Funders

Turbocharge Your Convening Power

Donors have a unique ability to engage stakeholders across the public, nonprofit, and private sectors. Bringing people together with a systems change lens creates a space for people to reconsider their immediate interests in service of the bigger picture. Systems thinking enables people to map the unintended consequences of actions, allows them to take responsibility for the problem, and empowers them to be a part of the solution in more effective ways. They become more motivated to and able to act in service of the whole instead of only their part—ultimately achieving greater impact.

Increase the Impact of Your Grantmaking

Funders faced with the philanthropic challenge of wanting to help people in both the short- and long-term often fail to recognize that quick fixes can hinder their ability to apply sustainable solutions. Because funders address chronic, complex problems, they must adopt a way of thinking to match. For example:

	Linear Thinking	Systems Thinking
Causality	A problem's symptoms and underlying causes are directly connected.	System performance is largely determined by interdependencies among system elements that are indirect, circular, and not always obvious.
Time	A policy that achieves short-term success ensures long-term success.	The unintended and delayed consequences of most quick fixes neutralize or reverse immediate gains over time.
Responsibility	Most problems are caused by external factors beyond our control.	Because actions taken by one group often have delayed negative consequences on its own performance, as well as the behavior of others, each group unwittingly contributes to the very problem it tries to solve.
Strategy	To improve the performance of the whole, we must improve the <i>performance</i> of its parts. Tackle many independent initiatives simultaneously to improve all of the parts.	To improve the performance of the whole, improve the <i>relationships</i> among the parts. Identify a few key interdependencies and shift them in a sustained, coordinated way over time.

Enhance Your Ability to Advocate for Effective Strategies to End Homelessness

Policymakers similarly confuse linear and systemic thinking. As a result, they can recommend policies that support quick fixes at the expense of long-term solutions. Funders can help education policymakers about a systems approach and thereby advocate for sustainable, system-wide solutions to complex problems like homelessness.

Want to learn more about systems change?
Looking for someone to present at your next event?
Contact Amanda Andere CEO of Funders Together:
amanda@funderstogether.org or at 617.245.0314.



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TO END HOMELESSNESS

617.245.0314
info@funderstogether.org
www.funderstogether.org