

2015 POLICY *platform*

We support [Opening Doors](#), the Federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness.

1. To end homelessness, start with a home.

For families and individuals living in deep poverty, housing costs are the single most expensive item in the household budget. Nearly all pay more than half of their incomes for rent. This leaves limited resources available for food, clothing, child care, and other essentials. The loss of a job, an unexpected illness, or a family crisis can all too easily push a family into homelessness. Far too many children are sleeping in shelters.

At the federal, state, and local levels, we call for an aggressive, bipartisan push by government, working in tandem with the private sector, to:

- ◆ **Make rental homes affordable to more people by expanding the supply of rental housing subsidies.** Rental assistance is a cost-effective, evidenced-based practice that is highly effective in reducing homelessness. It is the fastest way to make homes affordable to the greatest number of people with the lowest incomes. Currently, only one in four households eligible for rental assistance actually receives it.
- ◆ **Expand the supply of affordable rental homes by directing low-cost capital resources to the production and preservation of decent, safe rental housing.** Pair capital investments with rental subsidies to ensure housing units are within the reach of households most vulnerable to homelessness. At the federal level, fully fund the [National Housing Trust Fund](#) and preserve the [Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program](#).
- ◆ **Increase access to private market and public housing rental units by people experiencing homelessness and people with disabilities.** Create unit set-asides within state- or city-financed multifamily housing.
- ◆ **Expand supportive housing options by increasing funding for services.** The most successful intervention for ending and preventing chronic homelessness is linking housing to appropriate support services. [Supportive housing](#) ends the cycle of frequent and inappropriate use of expensive social supports and institutional care that people with complex needs cannot break while homeless.

2. Open pathways to meaningful and stable employment to prevent homelessness from re-occurring.

We believe that our communities are stronger when everyone who wants to work can find a job. To this end, we must broaden opportunities for jobs, job training, and income growth so that people who are facing high barriers to employment, including people who have experienced homelessness, can effectively participate in the labor market.

We call for aggressive efforts by government at the federal, state, and local levels, working in tandem with the private sector, to:

- ◆ **Level the playing field by creating and adopting performance measures**, under the new [Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act](#) (WIOA), to Workforce Boards aimed at effectively serving clients with high barriers to work.
- ◆ **Increase the capacity of local workforce systems and other systems to effectively respond** to the diverse work histories, education levels, and personal circumstances that people with high barriers to work present, so that they are connected to a spectrum of career pathways, training, and pre-training opportunities. Improve the way education, job readiness, training, placement, private employers, and support organizations work together to reduce barriers to employment for low-skilled workers. Share and disseminate best practices and [successful programs](#), and create stronger connections between workforce systems and homeless service systems to reduce barriers to accessing employment services.
- ◆ **Strengthen social enterprises** that are successful in helping people who have experienced homelessness prepare for, find, and keep decent paying jobs within thriving industries.

3. Prevent a new generation from becoming homeless.

In every community, young people run away from home, are kicked out, exit the juvenile justice system with nowhere to go, become orphans, and/or exit the child welfare system with no supports to enable successful transitions to adulthood.

We call for action at the federal and state levels to:

- ◆ **Extend foster care to age 21 or beyond in all states**, and ensure that all young people aging out of care have the opportunity to maintain safe housing until age 21 and beyond. Effectively use the period from age 18-21 to support young people in developing permanent relationships, pursuing educational and employment opportunities, securing housing, and developing skills to prepare them to live successfully in the community once they leave care.
- ◆ **Reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act**, which provides three different grants to communities so they can reach out to homeless youth on the streets and provide emergency housing with crisis intervention, basic life necessities, family interventions, and when necessary, longer-term housing options, including Maternity Group Homes.



Funders Together
TO END HOMELESSNESS

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