



RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS TO ADVANCE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT & INCOME FOR HOMELESS JOBSEEKERS

To:

United States Interagency Council on Homelessness

On behalf of:

*Funders Together to End Homelessness, Foundations for Employment and Housing
Community of Practice*

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The Foundations for Employment and Housing [Community of Practice](#) is a two-year learning cohort of foundations convened by Funders Together to End Homelessness. The Community of Practice has been exploring the intersection of employment and housing and is comprised of 12 private foundations and United Ways. The group has spent the last year examining the role funders play in aligning the housing and workforce system which has included virtual and in-person learning opportunities.

We recognize that housing and employment stability are inextricably linked. Numerous [studies](#) find that increased income is a strong predictor of a person exiting homelessness. The loss of or sudden fluctuations in income are often a precursor to eviction. [Eviction](#) and displacement from housing can lead to job loss and has the potential to trigger a host of negative consequences that can make it more difficult for individuals and families to be successful in work. [Evictions](#) can destabilize families, neighborhoods, school systems, and workplaces - all of which has ripple effects on health, safety, child development, and more. Residential instability can be especially traumatizing for children, with stress having wide-reaching consequences, including on their educational achievement.

[Research](#) tells us that individuals experiencing homelessness consistently rank paid employment alongside healthcare and housing as a primary need. When parents of families experiencing homelessness are asked to name one thing that would most help get their family back on its feet, the [most common answer is employment](#). Many individuals experiencing homelessness have a high school degree or equivalent or a job training certificate, license and/or some college experience. Furthermore, many people experiencing homelessness are working already but are not earning enough to keep a roof over their heads. Indeed, as many as [44 percent](#) of people who experience

homelessness earn some income through work and in many places this percentage is higher. When given the opportunity to work, time and again, people experiencing homelessness do.

Homelessness persists, in part, because public systems fail to equitably support people in obtaining the employment and income necessary for long term housing stability. Available data show that far too few are being connected to employment opportunities and income supports they need and want. For a variety of reasons, many systems across the country lack effective and equitable pathways to employment and income.

As a Community of Practice, we understand that in order to address these issues it is paramount that we work alongside public systems at the federal, state, and local levels in order to address and redress:

- inconsistent and inequitable policies and practices to support individuals experiencing homelessness in getting and keeping employment;
- lack of sufficient and aligned public system funding;
- need for continued innovation and learning;
- gaps in data and information; and
- building the national conversation and buy in around the role of income and employment in preventing and ending homelessness.

As such, FTEH Foundations for Employment and Housing Community of Practice is recommending that the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness and relevant federal agencies strategically partner with members of the Funders Together to End Homelessness Foundations for Employment and Housing Community of Practice and other members of Funders Together to End Homelessness and national experts to advance **four high-level recommendations through public/private partnerships**. We believe these recommendations are consistent with the vision and strategies put forth in [Home, Together](#): The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness as well as compliment and build upon the strategic action areas identified by the Interagency Working Group on [Employment and Homelessness](#) and the recommendations put forward by communities in the [Pathways Forward](#) report authored by Heartland Alliance.

It is our vision that in partnership we can advance these recommendations in order to ensure that every homeless jobseeker who wants to work has **equitable access to employment and income needed** to keep a stable roof over their heads.

Our recommendations and areas of action include:

1. **Support, and hold accountable community-led efforts focused on building the capacity of local workforce and homeless data systems.** On the workforce

side, efforts should include supporting communities in assessing and documenting the housing status of participants upon intake into workforce and education systems, and to record, report, and analyze changes in income over time, disaggregated by race, by service received in relevant workforce and education programs. On the homeless side, efforts should include supporting communities in assessing and documenting employment and income changes among homeless jobseekers upon exit and to record, report, and analyze changes over time, disaggregated by race, by service received in relevant workforce and education programs. Findings from efforts will be documented over time and shared with USICH and relevant federal and state partners in an effort to continue to inform the national dialogue about the employment and income needs of homeless jobseekers and inform federal, state, and local system and program solutions geared toward system equity. Technical assistance and supports to communities will be identified and deployed, as needed, to support efforts.

2. **Strengthen systems-led partnerships and program collaboration between WIOA and TANF, SNAP E&T, CCDBG, CDBG, EITC, and other relevant systems and federal programs** for the benefit of accessing workforce, education, and other supports from multiple systems and prioritizing populations experiencing homelessness. This may include, but will not be limited to, promoting systems collaboration that strengthen access to adult education, career and technical education, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs through WIOA Title I and Title II and supports through TANF, including but not limited to, subsidized employment and child care and other supports through these programs and systems. Lessons learned from efforts will be identified and shared with USICH and relevant partners in order to continue inform state and federal policy and systems change efforts. Technical assistance and supports to communities will be identified and deployed, as needed, to support efforts.
3. **Support new or continued demonstration projects to strengthen the impact of rapid rehousing programs paired with employment, education and supports.** The focus might be on addressing the employment and income needs of families with children and youth in rapid rehousing across a continuum of rapid rehousing structures and lengths of time. Evaluation and lessons learned will be gleaned and shared with USICH and stakeholders in order to strengthen the design, funding, and implementation of rapid rehousing as well as inform state and federal policy and systems change efforts. Technical assistance and supports to communities will be identified and deployed, as needed, to support efforts.
4. Support community-led efforts to more closely integrate employment and education supports into coordinated entry systems **focusing on embedding employment and education supports into coordinated entry systems and within the priorities and framework of local Continuums of Care.** Technical assistance and supports to communities will be identified and deployed, as needed, to support efforts.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our ideas with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness and look forward to forging strong partnerships in order to advance the ideas recommended here.

Sincerely,

Members of the FTEH Foundations for Employment and Housing Community of Practice (*listed below*)

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