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06 GENDER-EXPANSIVE HOMELESSNESS
DANIEL SOUCY

21 HOMELESSNESS CRISIS IN
BLOOMINGTON, IN
JOSIE MCQUILLAN
AND RACHEL DOWNEY

12 EXPANDING SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE
CAITLIN MELLO

30 SPEAKING UP & OUT:
SYSTEMIC CRUELTY
JAD REA

17 INTERVIEW: CONCERNS OF PEOPLE
EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS
INTERVIEW WITH MARY PROVENCE
CONDUCTED BY ANDREA COPELAND

32 HOMELESSNESS AND
HOUSING PROFILES
MAHASIN AMEEN & JAD REA



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The cardboard signs held by a man or woman as they stand on the side of the street often read "Hungry, please help;" "Veteran"; "Homeless-will work." Lining a sidewalk in a major city, sometimes covering blocks, are tents holding valued possessions of the residents. Across the nation and around the world millions of people from diverse cultural backgrounds, are living through unplanned homelessness and unsheltered conditions. At times, their lives in these settings are endured for a short term, but for far too many the time goes on for months, turning into years.

In the spirit of recognizing the broad field of housing and the unhoused, sheltering and the unsheltered; funding mechanisms for residences; biases and prejudices against the Other; policies and regulations, this issue of ENGAGE! will be the first of two. Our intent is to raise the voices of social workers and students; of administrators and the challenges they face in providing programs. Naming some of the critical failings of the largest building sector of the U.S., home construction, the contributors to this issue present extant data-filled reports; share personal narratives; use quantitative and qualitative methods; reflect on city, state, and national trends.

Structural factors leading to inaccessibility and discrimination confronted by gender-expansive people are described by Daniel Soucy. After describing the gaps in emergency housing services Soucy draws our attention to the experiences of LGBTQ+ gender-expansive youth and the damaging effects of harassment, discrimination, and bullying they experience.

Caitlin Mello examines the policies affecting social work licensure and the effects of the shortage of social workers on homelessness. The brief proposes the expansion of state-level legislation; the possible elimination of a social work licensure exam; and the expansion of licensing to non-degree holders. One idea is that the workforce supporting homelessness services can be changed to reflect the population being served.

Interviewed for this issue, Mary Provence shares how, at a very early age, the ethic of caring and the desire

to become a social worker and researcher was developed through family travels; unsolicited reading material about her future career, and interacting with community-based organizations. She tells of the many barriers blocking and preventing much needed support structures for unsheltered people. Her lived experiences provide insight into what advocates can do to humanize agencies.

In collaboration with a community based, non-profit organization working to address the issues and context of homelessness in a college town, Josie McQuillan and Rachel Downey shed light on the specific barriers that prevent unsheltered individuals from securing stable housing. The authors narrow their focus to the lives of "Hoosiers" in Bloomington, Indiana.

In the student voices section, "Speaking Up and Speaking Out," H. Jad Rea a MLIS student in the IU Luddy School, soundly pronounces homelessness as 'systemic cruelty' while offering some approaches that make a difference in the lives of unsheltered million. In addition, Mahasin Ameen and H. Rhea Jad contribute an extensive compilation of homelessness and housing organizational profiles to serve as accessible resources for readers.

Many resources are available throughout this issue. For example, below are links to a newly launched data base (December 2023) produced by SAVI a research center of the Polis Center at Indiana University. The database provides useful information about the ongoing efforts to address the challenges of evictions, high costs of housing, policies, and practices of realtors. The causes of evictions may best be described, according to the web site, as a 'synergy' of rising rent costs, poverty and low wages, inflation, drug and mental health challenges, citizens living paycheck to paycheck, common life occurrences like unexpected bills and the reduction of work hours. The dashboard features many resources for tenants, researchers, and stakeholders. "The goal of the tool is to raise awareness of evictions in Indiana and provide a resource to empower communities to instill change; users can explore trends of evictions and foreclosures; examine important associations between socioeconomic variables and evictions data; and take the opportunity to provide anonymous stories of their

eviction experience on a qualitative data page.” Empowering Indiana Communities with Evictions & Foreclosure Data - SAVI (<https://www.savi.org/empowering-indiana-communities-with-evictions-foreclosure-data/>)

Another resource for information is the Melville Trust. For instance, researchers at the Trust state there is evidence that homelessness impacts some communities more than others. Black Americans make up 13% of the US population but account for 40% of all people living without a home. Landlords file evictions against Black renters at nearly double the rate of White renters. “Homelessness is the result of economic, social, justice and housing systems that make quality housing a luxury, force chronically ill neighbors to sleep on sidewalks, and allow employers to pay wages that do not cover basic needs. The racial disparities we see in homelessness and housing instability are a result of deeply rooted inequities in systems like housing, jobs, and healthcare, which create multiple barriers for Black, Indigenous, and Latino/a/x people to obtain quality education, maintain their health, make a living wage, and secure a decent home.” The Issues - Data and Insights - Melville Charitable Trust (<https://melvilletrust.org/our-work/the-issues/>)

The second issue of *ENGAGE!* will bridge these ideas to ones concerned with visioning the future. This country, its leaders in government and private industry, is not prepared to provide caring support, and housing for its aging, over 70 population as reported by the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, “Over the next 10 years, the US population over the age of 75 will increase by 45%, from 17 million to nearly 25 million. The growth is widespread, across urban, suburban, and rural communities, and the sharpest among baby boomers who will begin entering their 80s in this decade.” Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies | Joint Center for Housing Studies (<https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/>) The issues are compounded according to the report, by widening income gaps, inequalities by race and ethnicity, home equity, and housing ownership wealth. “Older renter households are more likely to be headed by people of color.” Housing America’s Older Adults 2023 (https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/reports/files/Harvard_JCHS_Housing_Americas_Older_Adults_2023.pdf). Who are the designers and planners generating creating responses to climate change

that impact not only plants and animals but the homeless? And how will new ideas spark activism to address the state of housing in the future, a future that regards unsheltered refugees from famine and war?

The National Alliance to End Homelessness conducted a nationwide survey of homeless services employees, to learn about agency staffing challenges; low salaries and financial difficulties; the effects on service delivery and the need for far more resources to meet the needs of all people experiencing homelessness. Working-in-Homeless-Services-A-Survey-of-the-Field_12-5-23_FINAL.pdf (https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Working-in-Homeless-Services-A-Survey-of-the-Field_12-5-23_FINAL.pdf). Moving forward, the plan for the second volume of *ENGAGE!* addressing homelessness is to reflect community engaged and community based participatory research with leaders of the movement for equity and change.



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How Social Discrimination & Housing (Un)Affordability Causes Gender-Expansive Homelessness and Policy Recommendations to Ensure that Everyone is Housed

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Transgender, gender non-binary, gender non-singular and gender-questioning people (gender-expansive) in the United States are more likely than their cisgender counterparts to experience housing precarity and homelessness. While this disparity results from structural and individual discrimination that limits access to economic, social and political capital, it also results from a massive gap in the amount of affordable and adequate permanent housing available to all low-income members of U.S. society. As a person who experienced housing instability and unsheltered homelessness prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as discrimination from the mental health system as a result of my gender-identity during COVID-19, this policy brief is informed by my lived experience.

While I often felt shame and personal responsibility for my situation, I came to realize that my lived experience reflects structural inequities and gaps in the U.S. housing system.

Often, when people are unable to rent or own permanent housing due to the excessive and increasing cost of living in many parts of the United States, they rely on the emergency shelter system. This system has a diligent and attentive frontline workforce. There is also abundant evidence demonstrating that safe and affirming emergency housing can help stabilize mental health, physical health and financial challenges. Nevertheless, there is a systemic lack of funding to adequately support the shelter workforce and keep up with the need for emergency shelter beds.

Compounded by inadequate anti-discrimination rules, the emergency shelter system does not serve the needs of low-income, gender-expansive people. Using my lived experience as inspiration, this policy brief will outline these gaps in emergency housing services and their specific impact on gender-expansive people. It will then point to existing legislation and shelter reforms that could help alleviate these gaps.

Trends:

Gender-Expansive People Are More Likely to Experience Homelessness Due to a Limited and Exclusive Permanent and Emergency Housing System

Prior to 2019, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) did not track gender-expansive homelessness. However, independent research prior to 2019 and HUD data since 2019 clearly demonstrates that gender-expansive people are far more likely than their cisgender counterparts to experience homelessness and, in particular, unsheltered homelessness. While unsheltered homelessness has increased for all genders since 2019, Figure 1 demonstrates that gender-expansive people are much more likely to be forced to reside in a car, tent, abandoned building or other location “unfit for human habitation”.

These trends result from structural factors. Gender-expansive people are more likely to live without access to stable employment. They are also more likely to experience discrimination from their social networks. The consequences of these forms of social isolation are especially prevalent among youth. Gender-expansive youth

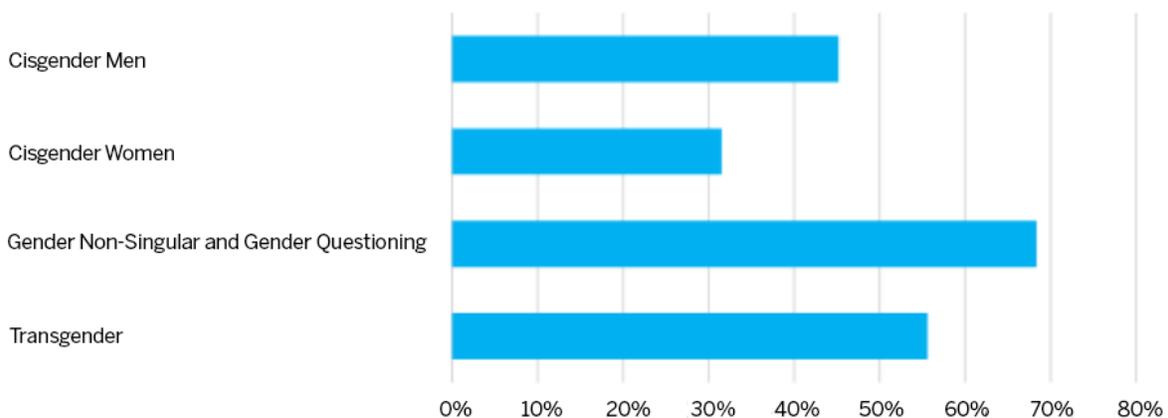
experience housing instability and homelessness at rates twice as high as cisgender youth. Figure 2 illustrates that nearly 40 percent of surveyed transgender youth reported

While unsheltered homelessness has increased for all genders since 2019 (HUD Exchange, 2023), Figure 1 demonstrates that gender-expansive people are much more likely to be forced to reside in a car, tent, abandoned building or other location “unfit for human habitation”

experiencing housing instability or homelessness during their lives. Leading causes of homelessness are bullying, harassment and discrimination that make it extremely difficult for gender-expansive youth to access education and economic opportunities.

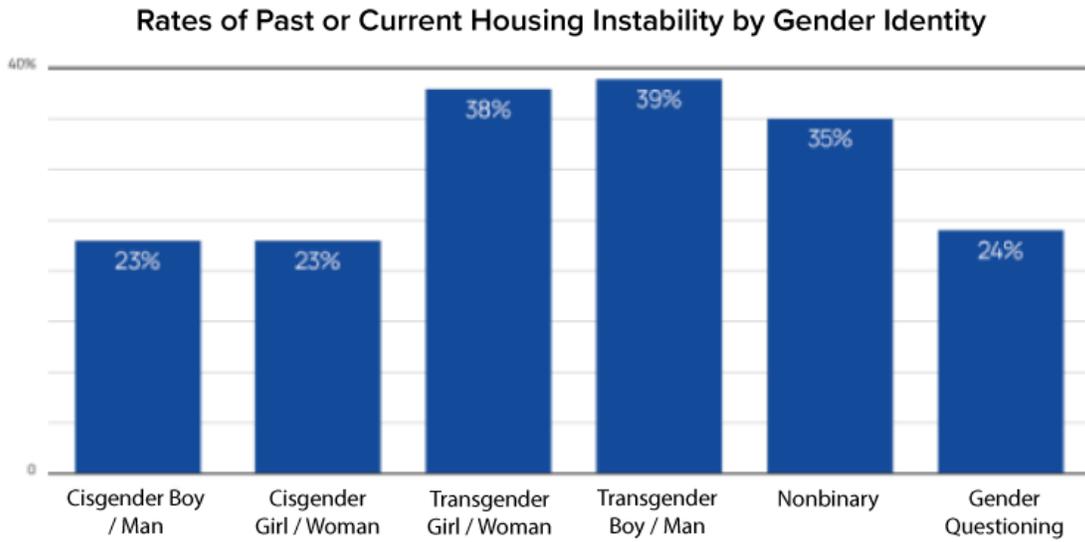
Figure 1:

Percent of People Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness in 2022



Note: (HUD Exchange 2023)

Figure 2:



Note: Rates of Youth Homelessness by Gender in 2022, The Trevor Project, 2022

LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING CAUSES HOMELESSNESS:

Housing precarity amongst low-income households has increased due to an affordable housing crisis across the United States. Households that HUD defines as ‘very low-income’ (those households making less than 50 percent of their area’s median income) and ‘extremely low income’ (those households making less than 30 percent of the area median income) are most likely to suffer from this shortage. Nevertheless, even wealthier households increasingly pay more than one-half of their income for rent or live in severely inadequate conditions and therefore also meet HUD’s definition of worst-case housing needs.

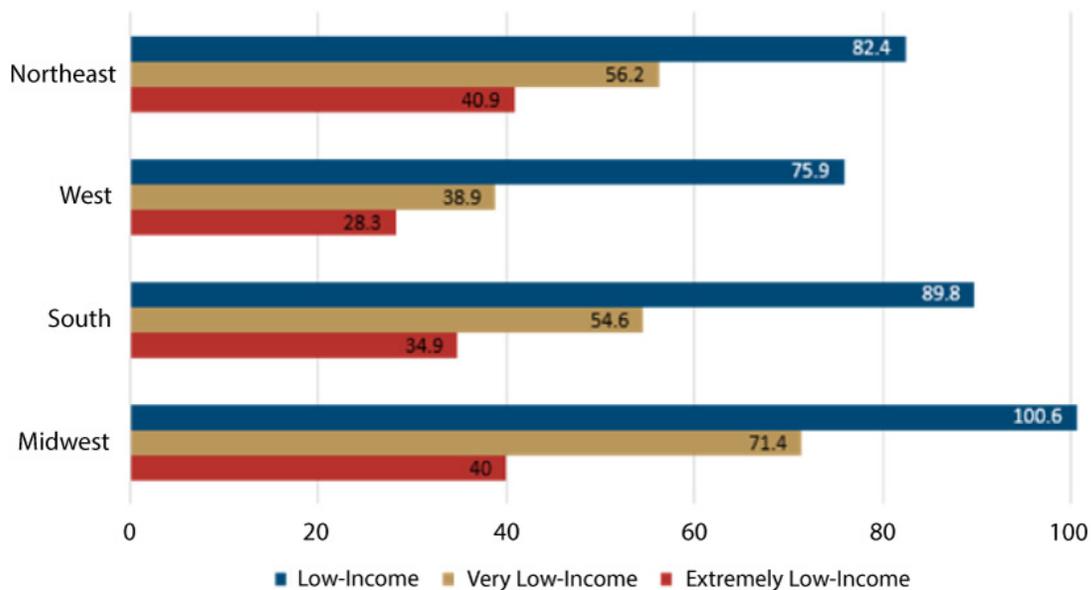
Methods to improve housing stability include Project Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) to fund designated units for low-income households and Housing Choice Vouchers which offer assistance to families with low income renting in the private market. However, due to budget shortfalls and poor management, these safety nets are both notoriously inaccessible to low-income residents and prioritize access to cisgender families at the exclusion of gender-expansive people.

SHELTERS REMAIN UNSAFE AND-UNAVAILABLE FOR GENDER-EXPANSIVE PEOPLE:

Without affordable housing, there is a greater need for emergency shelter assistance, especially for gender-expansive people and people of color. Just as permanent affordable housing is not meeting demand, neither are emergency shelters.

At the same time, emergency services like shelters and rapid rehousing programs are inaccessible to gender-expansive people. One study found that 85 percent of gender-expansive people experiencing homelessness did not seek shelter due to fear of mistreatment. Of those who did, 41 percent were denied access and 44 percent reported mistreatment (O’Neill & Wilson, 2020). Given that people of color also experience individual and systemic housing discrimination as a result of their race (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2021), gender-expansive people of color are even less likely to have access to stable housing.

Figure 3:



Note: Development & Research 2023

Policy Considerations: Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic and Current Funding Proposals

THE EVICTION PROTECTION PROGRAM:

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates that the federal government has mechanisms to reduce housing instability and homelessness for gender-expansive people. Specifically, during the pandemic, the treasury distributed an unprecedented \$46.5 billion in emergency rental assistance to states to prevent low-income people from losing their housing. The Office of Evaluation Services (OES) reported that people of color and women benefited from this assistance in large part because state housing authorities were required to promote racial equity and target assistance to these groups (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2021). Targeting federal assistance to gender-expansive people could similarly disrupt the inequities described previously.

GENDER-INCLUSIVE SHELTER ACCESS:

Gender-expansive people also suffer from state and local policies that empower private housing providers and non-profit shelters to discriminate against gender-expansive people. During the pandemic, however, many states utilized hotel rooms and other single occupancy units. Increasing rental assistance and non-congregate shelters that provide people of all genders more space and access demonstrates how funding and policy changes can ensure that gender-expansive people feel safe in their housing environment.

Additionally, lawmakers must ensure that HUD’s Equal Access Rule remains in place. The Equal Access Rule is a regulation which prohibits discrimination against LGBTQ people in HUD-funded shelter services. Crucially, it requires that transgender individuals be allowed to use the dorm and bathroom facilities that align with their gender identity. Conservative lawmakers have attempted to eliminate this rule when allocating funds to HUD . This would make it even more difficult and even more unsafe for gender-expansive individuals to seek emergency housing.

WHAT IS THE PROPOSED BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR 2024?

In its fiscal year 2024 draft spending bill, the U.S. Senate's Committee on Appropriation's Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) increased its allocation to HUD by \$8.26 billion (Appropriations, 2023). Meanwhile, the House spending bill proposed an increase of just \$2.91 billion and reduced HUD grant programs—a critical mechanism for improving low-income communities' ability to increase affordable housing supply —by \$1.733 billion. This is 28 percent lower than fiscal year 2023.

Researchers estimate that Congress needs to increase HUD's funding by at least \$13 billion to keep up with inflation and rising housing prices.

Implications:

Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and research by housing scholars have made abundantly clear that individual identifiers like race, gender and income exasperate homelessness, especially amongst gender-expansive people. However, at its core, homelessness is a housing problem. It is evident that the United States is experiencing an affordable housing crisis resulting from decades of inadequate funding. The solution is simple, albeit not politically expedient: Congress needs to greatly exceed previous funding increases for safe and affordable permanent housing and immediate short-term opportunities for emergency shelter.

ENSURE FEDERAL DISCRIMINATION PROTECTION IN HOUSING AND SHELTER

As previously mentioned, these shelters need to provide specific support to gender-expansive people and gender-expansive people of color who have traditionally been excluded from permanent and emergency housing programs. There also needs to be federal protections against discrimination in these settings. Without protections in both privately- and federally-funded shelter settings, gender-expansive people will continue to face barriers when seeking a place to stay, and will be forced into unsheltered settings.

INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

States and localities that have looked at their housing market data and increased affordable housing supply and targeted assistance to low-income households have had success in reducing housing instability and homelessness. Increasing affordable housing through federal policy will benefit all residents across geographic and demographic differences by creating a more equitable, secure and stable economy.

Gender-expansive people have effectively advocated for our health, economic and social safety for decades. We have also created alternative support systems like group homes and mutual aid networks to survive in the face of structural hostility. It is well past time to increase affordable housing and shelter for gender-expansive people, as well as affirm anti-discrimination protections within these systems. This will create a safer, equitable and inclusive society that will support all low-income households across the United States who have felt the stress and pain of housing insecurity and homelessness.

GENDER-EXPANSIVE PEOPLE NEED AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SAFE SHELTERS NOW:

- Future funding bills must dramatically increase housing affordability through Housing Choice Vouchers, public housing units and emergency rental assistance.
- Increases in funding must prioritize equity. Emergency housing organizations should institute non-discrimination protections and allow gender-expansive people to choose their housing environment based on their gender identity.
- At the same time, lawmakers should also allow HUD to increase emergency shelter beds specifically for gender-expansive people.
- The design and implementation of new permanent and emergency housing programs must include the voices of gender-expansive people and people of color with lived experience of homelessness.

Daniel Soucy, a researcher and advocate who identifies as Queer, white and a person with lived expertise of homelessness.

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Expanding Social Work Licensure to Strengthen the Homelessness Service Workforce

Author

CAITLIN MELLO

SUMMARY

Homelessness services require appropriate funding, access to necessary resources, and experienced staff to effectively connect individuals with housing and services through a Housing First lens. This policy brief examines part of the solution to the third requirement: trained and experienced staff.

PUBLIC PROBLEM

Finding experienced social workers to act as caseworkers for a population with increasingly complex needs is a challenge. Staff turnover remains high due to low wages and significant burnout. The National Alliance to End Homelessness estimates pay for permanent supportive housing staff is approximately \$42,912 annually; for emergency shelter staff, it is \$27,830 (Dubois & Oliva, 2023). With an average cost of living marked around \$49,255 to afford a one-bedroom apartment (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2023), these wages are not competitive, nor do they attract new staff to fill the gaps of an aging workforce. In addition to salary, high burnout rates result from working with individuals in desperate situations and having limited resources to solve increasingly complex problems (Fleetwood, 2010; Waegemakers Schiff & Lane, 2019). This brief will look at means to expand workforce licensure through appropriately applying requirements to ensure the workforce is accessible to and reflective of service

users. Currently, social work licensure requires, in most cases, a bachelor's or master's degree and passage of a costly licensure exam that has produced racially biased outcomes (Apgar & Nienow, 2023; Mina, 2022; Nienow et al., 2023). With increased access to licensure, homelessness services could have a clear path for professional development, increased access to funding streams for salary increases and additional benefits, and a more diverse cohort of caseworkers that reflects the population of individuals experiencing homelessness.

TRENDS

In recent years, there has been a shortage of social workers in homelessness services. It has notably impacted program capacity in several large Continuums of Care (CoC)¹, including recently in Washington, D.C. The Washington Post reported in February 2023 that hiring one licensed supervisor in a homelessness outreach organization would increase the program's caseload by 125 clients. This number means that 125 people experiencing homelessness would have quicker access to resources, housing, and case management to connect them with appropriate services (Swenson & Lang, 2023). The profession needs to dramatically improve access to licensure to ensure that these gaps are filled promptly, programs can utilize all the available resources, and people experiencing homelessness can efficiently connect to housing.

Social work licensure as a form of professional

¹A CoC is the governing structure designed to coordinate homelessness response by directing community-wide planning and effective utilization of resources.

development and increased access to funding is not accessible to all and often does not reflect the populations experiencing and most at risk of homelessness. Homelessness is disproportionately experienced by Black, Indigenous, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander communities within the United States, according to the 2022 United States Point in Time data (de Sousa et al., 2022; National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2023). Culturally competent and specific care would call for providers that reflect those statistics. While graduating social workers are becoming more reflective of the populations served, White women remain approximately 80 percent of the workforce (Salsberg et al., 2020). Exam requirements for licensure disproportionately favor White test takers, with the most recent data showing roughly a 90 percent pass rate, as opposed to a 40 percent pass rate for Black test takers (Association of Social Work Boards, 2022). Further disparity could be found for individuals who spoke English as a second language. Included below is a table outlining the demographics of exam passage in 2022. Beyond testing, Black social workers carry more significant debt burdens upon leaving MSW programs, according to recent data (Salsberg et al., 2020;

Saunders et al., 2016). To have a workforce reflective of community needs, testing and expensive higher education should not remain the only way to access professional social work as a career.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Homelessness is disproportionately experienced by Black, Indigenous, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander communities within the United States, according to the 2022 United States Point in Time data (de Sousa et al., 2022; National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2023). Culturally competent and specific care would call for providers that reflect those statistics.

Elimination of Exam Requirements

Following the release of data on the pass rates of the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB)

Table 1:

First-time Pass Rates of ASWB Exams by Race/Ethnicity

	Clinical Exam Pass Rates	Masters Exam Pass Rate	Bachelors Exam Pass Rate
Asian	79.7%	75.5%	64.2%
Black	57.0%	51.9%	38.3%
Hispanic/Latino	76.6%	71.2%	58.5%
Multiracial	86.6%	85.1%	78.4%
Native American/ Indigenous Peoples	73.5%	72.2%	70.9%
White	90.7%	90.8%	81.6%

Note: Percentages are pulled from the ASWB Exam Pass Rate Analysis and includes data from 2018-2021.

exam concerning racial disparities, many state legislatures reconsidered the use of a licensure exam to reflect competency. Illinois SB1632 removed exam requirements and resulted in approximately 2,500 additional social workers receiving licensure within six months compared to the prior year (National Association of Social Workers, 2022). Washington, D.C., has proposed the Social Work License Modernization Amendment Act of 2023, which would eliminate the use of the ASWB exam and convene a task force to create new recommendations for competency evaluations (2023). Utah H.B. 250 removed the examination requirement for licensure (2023). Maryland Senate Bill 145 passed in May of 2023 to provide temporary examination waivers for social work licensure until a new process for determining competency can be established.

States should continue removing examination requirements for determining social work competency. This step requires reviewing current licensure regulations and adopting appropriate edits to remove examination requirements. This language may vary from state to state.

Adoption of Licensed Social Work Associate Requirements

Massachusetts is the only state that allows access to licensure with four years of human services experience, documented supervision by a licensed social worker, and a high school diploma. Other states can replicate this model to expand access to social work professionalization beyond those who can access four-, five-, or six-year degree programs or have accessibility challenges within the current education model. The model language to create this pathway can be found in Massachusetts 258 CMR 9.06: Licensure Requirements for a Licensed Social Work Associate (2017). This policy requires 1,000 hours of education in social work theory and methods in courses or programs provided by field supervision, approved by the Massachusetts Licensure Board. Current programs in this context can mean working under the supervision of a licensed social worker providing community-based services for four years. This pathway expands opportunities

for individuals living in poverty, parents or caretakers, and people with disabilities that prohibit them from accessing higher education. If implemented, this could create a workforce more reflective of the populations served as access expands.

IMPLICATIONS

In implementing these two policy recommendations, state licensure boards can combat years of systemic racism and inaccessibility within the social work profession. To ensure the workforce reflects those experiencing homelessness, BIPOC social workers and social workers who speak English as a second language must have increased access to licensure. Licensure opens doors to supervisory roles that continue to be held predominantly by White social workers with advanced degrees. It can also create a larger pool for hiring during a significant social worker shortage across the country. By removing the exam requirement that disproportionately fails BIPOC social workers and opening licensure to people without completed degree requirements, the social work profession can take a step closer to equity.

Homelessness services can increasingly bill Medicaid for casework and other benefits when the provider has a license in social work. If more individuals can access licensure through lived experience, work experience, and mentorship, services can access increased funding through Medicaid reimbursement. This increased funding can be directed towards caseworker salaries and providing additional resources to individuals experiencing homelessness. The need for increased wages within the homeless services workforce is clear, and accessible funding streams can start to close that gap.

Social work licensure as a means to professionalize has resulted in a predominantly White workforce with advanced degrees (Salsberg et al., 2020). It has diminished access to a helping professional career path for BIPOC and low-income communities. For this reason, social workers should dedicate resources to question the current education and regulatory systems and consider significant shifts in the field with justice

in mind. In the immediate future, the solutions outlined here can increase access to professional development,

If more individuals can access licensure through lived experience, work experience, and mentorship, services can access increased funding through Medicaid reimbursement. This increased funding can be directed towards caseworker salaries and providing additional resources to individuals experiencing homelessness.

funding, and decision-making power for BIPOC providers and those with lived expertise to practice community care in homelessness services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Local leaders can begin addressing the historical inequality of the social work licensure process by first eliminating an exam requirement. The test outcomes disproportionately harm Black, Latino/Hispanic, and Indigenous social workers and the communities that greatly benefit from providers that share identity and culture. Elected officials can eliminate the exam requirement through the legislative process following models developed in Illinois SB1632. Local advocates can contact their legislators for the adoption of similar measures in their states. Social workers should connect directly with state licensure boards to request alternative licensing models that do not include exams.

State leaders should consider expanding access to licensure beyond those with a degree in social work. State licensure boards and elected officials can expand their licensure to include a high school diploma and relevant experience by recommending the adoption of language similar to Massachusetts 258 CMR 9.06: Licensure Requirements for a Licensed Social Work Associate (2017). It creates a new pathway to social

work that can ensure a diverse workforce reflective of the people served. Advocates and social workers can request these measures from state elected officials. In particular, homelessness service providers have a role in advocacy at the state level, as the potential for an increased licensed workforce pool will create more effective and responsive services.



Through the lens of an activist social work professor: Concerns for the rights of people who are experiencing homelessness

INTERVIEW WITH MARY PROVENCE CONDUCTED BY ANDREA COPELAND

Mary Provence, Assistant Teaching Professor of Social Work at Ball State University, shares in this interview her early years of living and working in the city. As part of her graduate studies at IUI, she worked closely with residents who in turn invited her to join their community. Early in her career, she called herself a “street outreach social worker.” Provence currently lives in that same community where she met her husband and volunteered to support youth. After sharing the reasons for launching the ENGAGE! journal, we began our discussion about homelessness and her commitment to effecting change.

Tell us about yourself and how you became interested in (homelessness and unsheltered) concerns?

In 8th grade, I distinctly remember it at the end of every chapter in our health book, it had a highlight of a career, a health-related career, and the the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) had a summary of what social workers do, and I read that. And of course, this was way before the Internet, so I literally wrote a letter and asked them to send me more information on what it meant to be a social worker.

I grew up in rural and small-town Indiana, and I knew that I lived in a place that didn't know these issues and I wanted to know people. And I cared. I cared deeply. I cared deeply about the people that I read about, and it

touched my soul in a great way.

I had my school library, public library, and home bookshelf. Those were the resources that I had, and so I learned the best that I could. The other thing was that my dad supported the Edna Martin Christian Center [in Indianapolis].

We would drive to Indianapolis for different reasons as a family. And I remember being on the interstate and looking down into the urban environment and wondering how do you get there? I don't understand because here I am, a child on the interstate, I'm seeing a place I want to go, that I want to learn about.

My undergraduate was at Taylor University. Taylor had many wonderful leaders that came and spoke to us. Are you familiar with Doctor John Perkins? John Perkins is, oh, he's probably 90 years old by now. But John was a founder of the Christian Community Development Association, and he did a vast amount of community organizing work in Mississippi. He's inspired people around the world to do this type of work. I met him. I've read his books. He's come to my community and multiple leaders like that. I began hearing them at Taylor and the more I heard them speak, I bought their books and read their stories. I'm like, this is exactly what I want to do.

How have you worked with issues facing people who are experiencing homelessness?

My husband and I, along with other community residents, started a community development organization in 2001 that for over a decade worked on the issue of affordable housing. In addition, I, along with other neighborhood women, worked to help women that were experiencing addiction and prostitution.

To back up a bit, in 1998, I became the first social worker on staff of Outreach Inc. In places that most people are afraid to go, and as a team, we worked critically on the issue of youth homelessness. I provided case management and crisis intervention to help youth get off the streets. I helped Outreach's founder open their very first drop-in center. Now Outreach Inc. has a beautiful, gorgeous new building here in the city, and they have lots more funding. They're a very large organization, but back then, we were some renegades, we really were.

And then in 2017 [at IU], I started my PhD program and was told 'Mary, you're going to be working with Dr. Beth Wahler, and you're going to be doing a needs assessment of the Indianapolis Public Library.' And I just grinned from ear to ear because I recognized that it encompassed everything that was important to me. When I was younger, I used to take my kids to the central public library, and I would see people experiencing homelessness. In fact, that was one of my stops years before when I was an outreach worker. I would meet kids down at the public library. So I had been there for years. And I'm like, 'the library needs a social worker.'

But even before I began the PhD program, I was teaching as an adjunct. One semester, I taught the very last case management class of the certificate program that no longer exists in the [IU School of Social Work]. Provence discussed placements in the community with organizations and individuals as part of this class. One person that she worked with was Maurice Young who was not affiliated with a formal agency; however, the school allowed her to place a student with him.

Mr. Young, a longtime advocate for the homeless community in Indianapolis, described himself as 'homeless by design.'

They [Mr. Young and the student] met at the public library. So again, this is pre any of the research that I did. This was all in the background of my life when I walked into the PhD program and was told I would be helping conduct a needs assessment at the Indianapolis Public Library.

What have you learned that may be applicable for advocates who want to effect change in the systems that are impacting homelessness?

First of all, we need to decrease the barriers to service. Sometimes agencies will have a rule that you have to prove that you're experiencing homelessness. So that's a barrier, you have to show up, maybe at a certain time or follow a certain protocol in order to get services or you have to have an ID. There are all these rules that you have to follow and a lot of times people experiencing homelessness simply can't follow: 'Well, my phone ran out of charge. I didn't know what time it was. I don't have money for a bus fare to get there on time. The police raided the camp and they took my birth certificate. I don't have the paperwork to get an ID.'

Honestly, as a social work profession generally, we haven't always done a good job about keeping those barriers low, but social work at the library is very organic. It's new, and I hope that as we formalize it in the profession, I hope we don't damage it. I really want to protect and preserve that organic nature of library social work because people can literally just walk in and ask for what they need.

As I have interviewed library social workers in my research, they tell me that when the client comes in and says, 'I need XY and Z.' OK, well, that's what they do. If they haven't done it before, they figure it out. There are almost no limitations to what a library social worker can assist with to break down those barriers (Provence, 2022). The library is so accessible because it's already in a place where people experiencing homelessness are naturally.

We also need to decrease barriers to increase accessibility. We really desperately need more daytime full-service drop-in centers. There are almost no drop-in centers in most places. That's one of many reasons why the libraries have so many daily patrons experiencing homelessness.

We need more daytime drop-in centers with full services and no need to prove that you're experiencing homelessness. But just 'hey, I'm walking in. I need to use the shower. I need to use the bathroom. I'd like to have a place to get my mail. I'd like to have a storage place. I'd like to meet with the social worker. I need to see the doctor. I need some legal help.' Very, very few cities have them, and the ones that do, there aren't enough of them. I'd say what the general public does not understand about homeless shelters is that they are often closed down during the day. You almost always cannot stay at the shelter during the day, so now you're back out on the street. Where are you supposed to go? Well, with the criminalization of homelessness and no daytime shelters, of course, they're going to end up at the library. You can sit in Steak and Shake only so long, or White Castle. They're not going to let you sit there all day long, even if you do buy a cup of coffee. At some point, their hospitality is going to run out.

We also need a statewide bill for persons experiencing homelessness. And in fact, this has been done before. Puerto Rico in 1998 was the first territory to enact a Bill of Rights. And then Rhode Island was the first state that did it (Rankin, 2015).

Typically, they're called a Homeless Bill of Rights, but Homeless Bill of Rights does not reflect person first language, so I'd love to see it renamed a Bill of Rights for People Experiencing Homelessness or some other kind of life-giving name. A statewide Bill of Rights would do several things, one, it would hopefully deter localities from continuing to criminalize homelessness. It would also need to have teeth in it for legal enforcement. It also would need to affirm the existing rights that people have (Rankin, 2015).

For example, it would prevent police harassment in public spaces, and also protect the privacy of the person experiencing homelessness from search and seizure. Just

because your stuff is in a public place doesn't mean the police should have the right to automatically grab your stuff, throw it away or search.

Related to advocacy, how can community members who are experiencing homelessness advocate for themselves and others?

The whole idea of thinking about people who are experiencing homelessness and being advocates for themselves is challenging. If people are in survival mode, they can't spend a whole lot of time being an advocate for change.

Criminalization is at issue for many who are experiencing homelessness how might we safeguard the agency of individuals who are experiencing homelessness?

Criminalizing homelessness is incredibly expensive. It's also very dangerous because what it does is it pushes people farther and farther out to more and more remote places where they can't access services.

If you look up what happened with Maurice's camp when it was destroyed. All that stuff was dumped. Literally dumped. Yes, I know we now have an ordinance here in Indianapolis, but if you read the language carefully there are loopholes in it that it's pretty easy for peoples' stuff to get destroyed. It says they have to store it for 60 days. Well, if you're experiencing homelessness, you may face many obstacles to getting it back. What are you going to do after 60 days? It's most likely going to be destroyed.

Now your insulin is gone. Let's say you had your birth certificate in your tent. Now it's gone. If you were to lose your housing today, what would be the items you would take? The things you could just not live without. You take your birth certificate, you take your Social Security card, you would take your medications, your toothbrush, your underwear.

When you think about the criminalization of homelessness and the destroying of camps, those are the things that go missing.

There is an economic vulnerability that impacts so many people and the high costs and substantial increase in the cost of housing. Is economics the biggest problem? What else is at issue?

The underlying issue of why we don't have enough affordable housing, why we have the criminalization of homelessness, all of it, is dehumanization. We don't view people that are in extreme poverty as human as much as we view ourselves as human. We don't look at their feelings, their emotions, their values, their life story, their experiences.

Instead, we other them into the label, 'the homeless.' You're now 'homeless,' and in that moment, they lose their face. They lose their agency; they lose their feelings. We can then justify treating them in ways that are less than how we would want to be treated.

If we really care about people in the United States, we can eradicate homelessness. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the U.S. is short 7.4 million units of affordable housing (Aurand et al., 2022). We need to build that affordable housing—and not for 60% of the area median income. I think instead of basing affordable housing on the area median income, we need to base it on the federal poverty guideline.

We really need to build affordable housing for the lowest of the low-income folks. We need to have low-income housing that a person on Social Security can afford without having to live in squalor. We have some of that housing, but there's not enough. If anybody's paid any attention at the library, much of the population of people experiencing homelessness are our grandmothers and our grandfathers. It is a travesty and an insult to the United States that we are letting our older adults live on the street.

You can build tiny homes; you can do mixed-income housing. You can do more Section 8 vouchers. There are so many things that you can do that are a better use of our money than criminalization.

Then next comes economics. We don't have a living wage. You can look at the MIT living wage (<https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/18>) calculator and for a family of four, two working adults and two kids in Indianapolis,

you need to have both working parents each earning \$22.40 an hour to make it.

We don't have a living wage. We need to get a living wage. We need more affordable housing, more Section 8 vouchers. We need to understand that SNAP and TANF do not meet the gap between minimum wage and a living wage. Still, you cannot reach the cost of affordable housing. We need a lot more mental health treatment. We need a lot more substance abuse treatment.

This is my own personal bent, but there's a lot of research evidence to back it up.

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Understanding the Homelessness Crisis and Responses in Bloomington, Indiana

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Homelessness, Housing First, Low-barrier assistance

ABSTRACT

This study addresses the complex challenges of homelessness in Bloomington, Indiana. Beacon, Inc., a nonprofit based in Bloomington, plays a pivotal role in providing support to individuals experiencing homelessness in south-central Indiana. Beacon's approach prioritizes immediate and barrier-free access to shelter and housing while eliminating stringent entry requirements. Beacon offers three distinct programs: Friend's Place, an emergency shelter; Rapid Re-Housing, facilitating rapid transitions to stable housing; and Crawford Homes, providing permanent supportive housing.

This research, conducted in partnership with Beacon, employs a mixed-methods approach to examine homelessness in the city of Bloomington. It includes a literature review, quantitative data analysis from nationwide counts and Beacon's programs, and interviews with Beacon staff to gain insights into the housing crisis and its unique dynamics in this community.

The results underscore the impact of Beacon's programs in 2022 on individuals experiencing extreme poverty in Indiana's Region 10, which consists of six south-

central counties. Despite the success of these programs, challenges persist for individuals experiencing homelessness, particularly in combating chronic homelessness. Interviews with Beacon staff highlighted additional barriers to housing, including high rent, inflexible landlords, evictions, and entanglement with the criminal justice system.

This study suggests the need for diverse strategies, including expanding Housing First programs and supportive housing models, as well as long-term government housing subsidies for low-income renters. These solutions can reduce reliance on emergency shelters and work to prevent chronic/recurrent homelessness. By employing a mixed-methods research approach, this study offers valuable insights into homelessness and housing assistance programs, providing a foundation for future research aimed at comprehensively addressing homelessness in Bloomington and similar communities.

INTRODUCTION

Homelessness is a pressing and multifaceted issue that deeply affects the community of Bloomington, Indiana, touching the lives of its residents and demanding urgent attention. In 2022, the Point in Time (PIT) count, which is "a nationwide count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single date" (HUD, 2022), estimated that 5,449 Hoosiers were experiencing

homelessness (HUD, 2022). Region 10 of Indiana, which includes Bloomington in Monroe County, as well as five other neighboring counties (Lawrence, Morgan, Owen, Greene, and Martin), accounted for 426 individuals experiencing homelessness alone (HUD, 2022).

Notably, Bloomington is a city that has been home to Indiana University (IU), the state's flagship campus, for over 200 years since the institution was first established in 1820 (Indiana University Bloomington, n.d.). As IU's enrollment continues to increase at record pace this past year and the IU student presence in Monroe County grows (Indiana University, 2023), it begs the question of how this affects community members (Smith, 2022) who live in this distinct college town/city and who are experiencing homelessness. Overall, the housing crisis in Bloomington is complex, driven by factors such as rising median rent, a shortage of available low-income housing options, a significant population of college students, and the criminalization of homelessness. These challenges contribute to and perpetuate homelessness within the city, making it imperative to explore the issue comprehensively.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is essential to situate this study within the broader context of literature on homelessness. The criminalization of homelessness in the United States has been well documented via nationwide studies, as well as specific studies focused on individual U.S. cities (Amster, 2003; Foscarinis, 1996). Many of these studies focus on homelessness within heavy metropolitan areas or the downtowns of major cities (Love & Loh, 2023). However, when considering homelessness strictly within the context of college towns or smaller cities such as Bloomington, there is only preliminary research and data available on the situation in the United States. A recent study from England claims that homelessness is more prevalent in university/college towns within the country (Hurst, 2022). However, in the U.S., research on homelessness in college towns is covered mainly through individual news articles or ethnographies of certain towns or regions (Amster, 2003; Girdwood,

2016; MacMillian, 2013; Malh, 2023) or focuses on disparities evident in adjacent inequalities, such as income inequality in college towns (DePietro, 2022). Within the context of Indiana, literature on this subject reveals several critical insights and highlights the gravity of the issue. Recent studies (HUD, 2022) have indicated a downward trend in homelessness in Indiana since 2007, which is an encouraging development. However, despite this overall trend, it is important to recognize that homelessness remains a pressing concern in specific communities, such as Bloomington. Studies emphasize the importance of examining the local context when addressing homelessness (O'Flaherty, 2019). The unique challenges faced by communities like Bloomington are underscored by localized factors. Specifically, the presence of Indiana University significantly influences housing availability and affordability. The demand for student housing not only raises rent but also reduces the supply of affordable housing units for low-income residents. Moreover, Bloomington's housing crisis is compounded by an anti-homelessness culture at the state and city levels, reflected in various anti-homelessness and municipal laws. For example, in 2020, the Indiana General Assembly sought to restrict panhandling (solicitation or begging) statewide, a move that was later halted by a federal preliminary injunction (ACLU of Indiana, 2020). Additionally, within the past year, the city of Bloomington has upheld comparable anti-homelessness laws by prohibiting tents or homelessness encampments in public parks (Lewis, 2023), contributing to the continued displacement of Bloomington's homeless individuals (Stock, 2023). Such local policies can further marginalize individuals experiencing homelessness, making it crucial to explore compassionate and effective interventions.

While there is a growing body of research on homelessness at the national and state levels, there is a notable scarcity of literature specifically addressing homelessness in Bloomington, Indiana. Only a few studies have explored the issue in this specific location, and these have primarily focused on specific subpopulations or aspects of homelessness. For instance, a recent study conducted in Bloomington examined

homelessness amongst people with companion animals, revealing their high attachment to their pets and the need for more pet-friendly overnight shelters (Kim, 2019).

Moreover, Bloomington's housing crisis is compounded by an anti-homelessness culture at the state and city levels, reflected in various anti-homelessness and municipal laws.

While this study provides valuable insights, it also highlights the shortage of comprehensive research on homelessness in Bloomington, particularly concerning its broader dynamics and the efficacy of existing interventions.

Several national studies (Culhane, 2017; O'Flaherty, 2019) on homelessness have emphasized the significance of low-barrier and Housing First approaches in effectively addressing homelessness. These models prioritize immediate and barrier-free access to shelter and housing, with the Housing First model gaining recognition for its success in reducing homelessness through the provision of immediate housing without preconditions, followed by the delivery of supportive services. Nonprofits, such as Beacon, Inc., that employ these strategies to assist homeless individuals in college town communities play a crucial role in advocating for the needs of the homeless population in these particular settings.

BEACON, INC.

Beacon, Inc., is a Bloomington-based nonprofit organization dedicated to aiding and empowering people experiencing homelessness. Beyond providing essential assistance programs, the staff and volunteers of Beacon actively engage in hands-on initiatives to understand and address homelessness in Bloomington. One important aspect of Beacon's commitment is its direct involvement in the annual Point in Time (PIT)

count. The PIT count is often completed with the assistance of individuals who routinely serve persons experiencing homelessness, and this is indeed true for Beacon workers and volunteers in Bloomington. This collaborative effort is crucial, as the trust established between service workers and those in crisis through routine interactions is instrumental in encouraging homeless individuals to participate in the count. This trust fosters an environment conducive to collecting accurate and insightful data.

Beacon's approach emphasizes immediate and low-barrier access to shelter and housing, aligning with the previously discussed evidence-based practices. This

This collaborative effort is crucial, as the trust established between service workers and those in crisis through routine interactions is instrumental in encouraging homeless individuals to participate in the count. This trust fosters an environment conducive to collecting accurate and insightful data.

involves eliminating sobriety requirements, income prerequisites, and other policies that hinder entry, retention, or access to opportunities. Beacon offers several impactful programs, including Friend's Place, an emergency shelter (ES); Rapid Re-Housing (RRH), facilitating rapid transitions to stable housing; and Crawford Homes, providing permanent supportive housing (PSH). Friend's Place stands out as the only year-round, non-religious emergency shelter for adults in the Bloomington area, providing 40 safe and sober beds. Rapid Re-Housing offers short-term financial assistance for security deposits, rent, utilities, moving expenses, application fees, etc., as well as providing supportive case management. Crawford Homes offers housing and supportive services for individuals experiencing long-term homelessness due to a disability, providing 110 PSH homes. These programs are

critical components of the multifaceted response to homelessness in Bloomington.

AMERICORPS INVOLVEMENT:

During the summer of 2023, I had the privilege to serve at Beacon's day shelter, known as the Shalom Center, as part of an AmeriCorps program in partnership with the Indiana University School of Medicine (IUSM), called the Hoosier Public Health Corps (HPHC). This experience provided me with a unique opportunity to witness firsthand the challenges faced by individuals experiencing homelessness in Bloomington. It also served as the catalyst for conducting a community-engaged research project to investigate homelessness in Bloomington, with a specific focus on the responses to the city's housing crisis within the context of Beacon's three homelessness assistance programs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES:

This study embraces a Community-Engaged Research (CER) approach, in which research is a "true collaborative enterprise between researchers and communities" (Wong-Parodi, 2022). Practically, this approach involves "clarifying research and engagement goals, learning about community context, building trust and relationships, being flexible, and demonstrating long-term commitment" (Wong-Parodi, 2022). This study's foundational framework is based on critical community-based epistemologies. Using this framework yields a methodology that incorporates key principles of reciprocity, relationality, a focus on action, the use of conversational storytelling, and reflective practices (Shah, 2020).

Community-Engaged Research, as implemented in collaboration with Beacon, places Beacon staff in a central role guiding the project's direction. The primary objectives of the study, as established by Beacon staff, involve gaining a profound understanding of homelessness in Bloomington, evaluating the impact of Beacon's programs, identifying challenges faced by individuals experiencing homelessness, exploring effective strategies, and contributing to ongoing efforts

to enhance the well-being of individuals affected by this crisis, while working towards lasting solutions for the community.

The methodology utilizes a mixed-methods research approach, combining quantitative analysis and qualitative interviews. Quantitative data sources include the 2022 Point in Time (PIT) count and Housing Inventory Count (HIC), in addition to de-identified 2022 program data provided by Beacon, Inc., specifically sourced from the Annual Performance Reports of Beacon Crawford Homes (Version 1.2), Friend's Place (Version 1.2), and ESG RRH (Version 1.2). Notably, the active participation of Beacon staff and volunteers in the PIT count data collection further enriches the quantitative data. This study also integrates qualitative data gathered through interviews with three de-identified Beacon staff members. To safeguard participant privacy, roles and responsibilities of the staff members remain unnamed in this study. This multifaceted research approach facilitates a more holistic exploration of homelessness in Bloomington, combining quantitative rigor with qualitative depth to capture the nuances of the challenges faced by individuals experiencing homelessness.

RESULTS

Analysis of the quantitative data reveals the significant impact of Beacon's assistance programs for individuals experiencing homelessness in Region 10. As shown in Table 1, Beacon alone sheltered or housed 88.75 percent of the population experiencing homelessness in Region 10 in 2022.

Furthermore, the quantitative data highlights the value of Beacon offering three distinct assistance programs to meet different needs, as seen in the distribution of active clients in Beacon's programs in Figure 1.

The Friend's Place program had a utilization rate of 74 percent and provided 11,761 bed nights, representing the total number of beds filled each night during the year, in 2022. The Rapid Re-Housing program had a utilization rate of 100 percent, and 52.9 percent of individuals assisted through this program successfully moved into housing in 2022. The Crawford Homes program had a

Table 1.

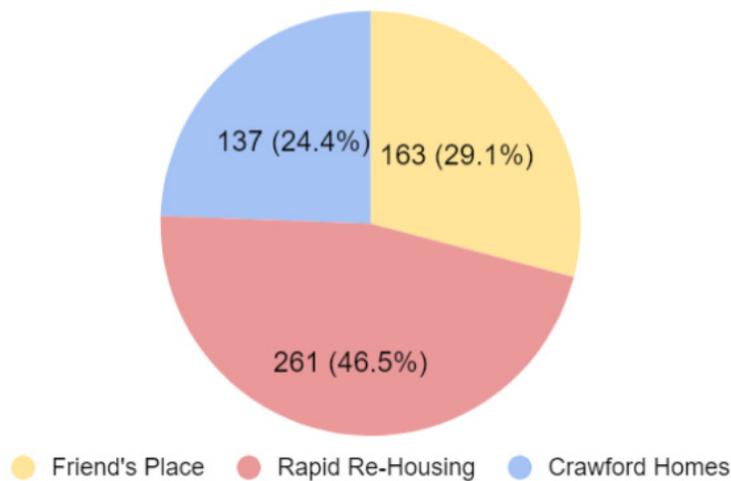
Number of people sheltered (*or moved into housing) by Beacon's three programs in 2022 compared to the PIT's estimated number of unsheltered individuals in Region 10 of Indiana in 2022.

Project Type	Program	People Sheltered*	Percentage Sheltered*	Total Percentage Sheltered* By Beacon
Homeless Housing	ES (Friend's Place)	163	34.0%	88.75%
Permanent Housing	RRH	138	28.75%	
	PSH (Crawford Homes)	125	26.0%	
<i>Unsheltered Estimate in Region 10</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>11.25</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Total	n/a	480	100%	88.75%

Figure 1.

The number and percentage of active clients in each of the three Beacon programs in 2022.

Active Clients across Beacon's Three Programs



utilization rate of 93 percent, and 91.2 percent of individuals served by this program obtained stable housing, either within Crawford Apartments or in scattered-site apartments throughout the community in 2022. These utilization rates underscore the capacity of Beacon's programs to address homelessness and facilitate housing

stability. Despite the evident benefits of these programs, the data reveals a high prevalence of individuals who are experiencing chronic homelessness. For this study, individuals experiencing chronic homelessness are defined as those with a disabling condition who have either been continuously homeless for at least one year or homeless

at least four times in the past three years (HUD, 2022). In 2022, 27.0 percent of Friend's Place clients and 75.9 percent of Crawford Homes clients met this definition. This identified struggle of long-term and recurring homelessness is informed by the qualitative data found in this study. Interviews with Beacon staff members reveal specific barriers in Bloomington that impede unsheltered individuals from attaining stable housing, as outlined in Figure 2. The high rent and overall cost of living in Bloomington pose considerable challenges for individuals striving to maintain housing stability. A staff member emphasized that “college towns see this a

The prevalence of high eviction rates further contributes to and perpetuates homelessness, as individuals must restart the difficult process of finding a home.

lot, the cost of living is higher here” and noted that “rent in town keeps going up.” These elevated rent costs are, in part, attributed to the presence of Indiana University, which must accommodate a large and growing number of students. Additionally, challenges in working with inflexible local landlords hinder Beacon staff’s efforts to help clients secure housing; one staff member explained, “some landlords have refused to work with us.” The prevalence of high eviction rates further contributes to and perpetuates homelessness, as individuals must restart the difficult process of finding a home. Furthermore, homelessness itself is criminalized, and any involvement with the criminal justice system poses another barrier to achieving stable and secure housing. A staff member pointed out that “rapid re-housing is only short term [assistance]” and thus any disruptions to one’s housing can be exceptionally difficult for individuals to recover from. These factors may, in part, account for the 11.25 percent of individuals in Region 10 who are unsheltered and the elevated prevalence of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in this area.

Figure 2. Barriers to permanent, stable housing in Bloomington, as identified by Beacon staff members.



DISCUSSION

The quantitative and qualitative findings from Beacon highlight the complexity of homelessness and the need for diverse approaches. The significant impact of each of the three Beacon programs supports the implementation of multiple forms of low-barrier assistance within a single community. As discussed earlier, Beacon’s programs have successfully sheltered or housed a significant percentage of the people experiencing homelessness in Region 10.

The utilization rates reveal a substantial demand for all three of Beacon’s programs, underscoring the evident need for these services in the community. The 100 percent utilization rate for Rapid Re-Housing is particularly noteworthy, as it demonstrates the program’s capacity to address immediate housing needs effectively. Similarly, the 93 percent utilization rate for Crawford Homes highlights its role in providing stable housing solutions to individuals experiencing long-term homelessness, a persistent issue in Bloomington. These utilization rates align with the broader objectives of addressing homelessness in Bloomington, including reducing primary reliance on emergency

shelters like Friend’s Place and breaking the cycle of homelessness. Beacon’s programs actively contribute to the overarching goal of offering individuals stable and supportive living environments, thereby working towards a lasting reduction in homelessness in the community.

Additionally, it’s crucial to acknowledge the effectiveness of the Housing First model, a cornerstone of Beacon’s approach. The Housing First model prioritizes immediate housing, followed by the provision of supportive services. These services encompass a wide range of support, including case management to assist clients in achieving employment, healthcare access, stability, self-sufficiency, and personal goals. Individuals in need are also connected with various community services, such as mental health counseling, substance use disorder treatment, medical care, and legal assistance.

Research has demonstrated that mental health and substance use services, while important, do not affect the stability of housing outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness (O’Regan, 2021). Thus, immediate and low-barrier housing should be prioritized (O’Regan, 2021). In a randomized controlled trial of a Housing First intervention for adults with mental disorders in Toronto, it was found that the Housing First approach was strongly associated with rapid transitions to sustained housing: 70.4 percent of Housing First participants versus 27.9 percent of treatment-as-usual participants (Lachaud, 2021). Homelessness can be both a cause and consequence of poor mental healthcare, and by overturning conventional prerequisites such as medication adherence, abstinence, and proof of “housing worthiness,” Housing First has proven to be effective in assisting individuals experiencing homelessness (Padgett, 2020). The growing evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of the Housing First approach reinforces the importance of ensuring that individuals have rapid access to housing regardless of their sobriety or mental health status and then offering support services on a voluntary basis (Padgett, 2020). This approach contributes to Beacon’s effectiveness in addressing homelessness in Bloomington and

maintaining the humanity of the city’s homeless individuals.

While the literature suggests that completing a rapid re-housing program is a significant predictor of remaining in permanent housing (Brown, 2018), this project has unveiled a range of external factors that contribute to recurrent and chronic homelessness in Bloomington. These persistent barriers align with findings in the existing literature. For example, research indicates that the absence of income growth during participation in a rapid re-housing program increases the risk of returning to homeless services (Brown, 2017). Additionally, a study of individuals experiencing homelessness who participated in transitional programming revealed that a lack of social support from friends and family was significantly associated with a repeated episode of homelessness within a year of program departure and with a faster time to return to the homeless shelter (Duchesne, 2015). Despite the utilization of transitional programs like Rapid Re-Housing, multiple barriers continue to prevent individuals from attaining permanent housing. While these programs play a vital role in responding to homelessness, there is an identified

These services encompass a wide range of support, including case management to assist clients in achieving employment, healthcare access, stability, self-sufficiency, and personal goals. Individuals in need are also connected with various community services, such as mental health counseling, substance use disorder treatment, medical care, and legal assistance.

need for larger upstream changes in Bloomington to achieve a lasting reduction in homelessness.

Addressing the multifaceted challenges contributing to chronic homelessness in Bloomington demands a strategic and comprehensive approach. One evidence-based strategy involves the expansion of long-term

federal government housing subsidies, such as Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, aimed at assisting low-income renters (Fischer et al., 2019; Garboden et al., 2018). These subsidies have notably demonstrated their effectiveness in Beacon's work, playing a crucial role in providing affordable and stable housing options for individuals and families at risk of homelessness. Such federal policies are significant factors in shaping the availability and accessibility of resources that are vital to effectively combating homelessness at the local level (Fischer et al., 2019). In the context of Bloomington, tackling the complexities of homelessness necessitates more than isolated measures; it calls for comprehensive systemic changes. This involves not only the expansion of federal housing subsidies such as Housing Choice Vouchers, but also policy reforms, community-level initiatives, and holistic housing strategies (Fischer et al., 2019; Garboden et al., 2018). Through the collective implementation of these measures, we can forge lasting solutions and address the root causes of homelessness in our community.

To address these findings and gain a more comprehensive understanding of homelessness in Bloomington, it is essential to acknowledge this study's limitations. A primary constraint is the small sample size, consisting of only three interviewees. This limited sample size implies that there may be factors contributing to Bloomington's housing crisis that were not captured in this research. While this study involved interviews with Beacon staff and analysis of program data, conducting direct interviews with individuals currently experiencing homelessness in Bloomington presents an opportunity to collect valuable narratives and insights not captured in this study's qualitative data. Although interviews with individuals experiencing homelessness would require stringent ethical considerations due to participants' vulnerability, they could also offer valuable insights into this crisis. Future research should aim to delve into the experiences and perspectives of those currently facing homelessness in Bloomington, thus enriching our understanding of homelessness and its complexities in this community. Despite these limitations, this study represents a valuable starting point for comprehending homelessness

in Bloomington and identifying potential areas for future research and improvements within the community.

CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

This study is part of an ongoing effort to better understand the challenges that individuals experiencing homelessness face in securing and maintaining affordable housing in Bloomington, Indiana. It also aims to assess local homelessness response programs and identify persisting barriers. Evidence-based solutions to overcome factors contributing to chronic homelessness in Bloomington may include expanding Housing First programs, implementing more low-barrier supportive housing models, and providing long-term government housing subsidies for low-income renters. These measures can reduce reliance on emergency shelters like Beacon's Friend's Place as the primary solution to homelessness and work toward breaking the cycle of homelessness.

Moreover, this study underscores the value of employing a mixed-methods research approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data, to gain a comprehensive understanding of homelessness within specific communities, such as college towns and cities. Personal narratives from individuals closely connected to homelessness, such as those associated with Beacon, offer valuable insights that complement and inform quantitative data on homelessness and related assistance programs. Future research in this area should delve deeper into specific barriers, such as eviction rates, parole participation, and legal/criminal cases, to better understand their impact on the housing prospects of individuals experiencing homelessness in Bloomington and other college towns/cities.

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Speaking Up and Speaking Out: Systemic Cruelty

Author

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When researching homelessness and the housing crisis, the first thing I notice is the cruelty.

For example, from the Heritage Foundation (Rufo, 2020):

“First, policymakers must ensure a baseline of public order—in short, enforce the laws against public camping, drug consumption, and homelessness-related property crimes—which is a prerequisite for any successful intervention.” (emphasis added)

Notice the language: “public order,” “drug consumption,” “property crimes.” Unhoused people are not human; they are public nuisances. Often editorial pieces and news coverage employ language that is insensitive, dehumanizing, and based on fearmongering about people living with addiction and mental health issues.

The concept of “law and order” is a fundamental core of the conservative movement. But “order” is entirely superficial. “Order” means not seeing unhoused people in desperate, vulnerable situations out in public; it means hiding them from public view—not working with them to provide resources, not making structural changes to address cyclical poverty and systemic inequities that are frequent causes of homelessness.

This became especially clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, as companies cut hours and jobs, and rent and mortgages grew increasingly unaffordable. Many were forced onto the streets and into vulnerable situations, perhaps the least of which was putting them at increased risk of COVID. Both COVID and housing instability disproportionately affected communities of color (Lake, 2020). Some temporary relief came in the form of stimulus checks and a freeze on mortgage payments. Then we decided COVID had ended, and the money ran out; America moved on but the unemployed and unhoused remained.

Last year, HUD released its annual report on homelessness and found, “On a single night in 2022, roughly 582,500 people were experiencing homelessness in the United States” (Office of Policy Development and Research). Black and Indigenous people were and are disproportionately represented; the 2022 Annual Homeless Assessment Report found Black people made up 37% of all people experiencing homelessness, and 50% of people experiencing homelessness with children.

Recent legislation attempts to address homelessness. The Housing Crisis Response Act of 2023 would provide over \$150 billion in funding for affordable housing and investments in closing the racial housing gap. The Ending Homelessness Act of 2023 would include \$10 billion to provide housing for people experiencing homelessness and make the temporary Interagency Council on Homelessness permanent. Both acts were introduced to the House by Rep. Maxine Waters, D-C.A., and currently sit in limbo. On the global stage, the 58th session of the UN Commission for Social Development released the first UN resolution on homelessness. But these are words.

The real work is done on the ground, by community organizers and activists making do with what little resources they have. In America, they tend to fall into two categories: prevention and support. The prevention organizations are legislation focused. For example, National Alliance to End Homelessness (endhomelessness.org/) and the Urban Institute (<https://www.urban.org/>), each with national headquarters in Washington, D.C. Other support organizations work with people experiencing homelessness to address each person’s unique needs. For example, the Pathways Home (pathwayshome.org/) in Birmingham, Ala., and the Spokane Homeless Coalition (<http://www.spokanehc.com/>) in Spokane, Wash.

Here in Indiana, Prosperity Indiana (prosperityindiana.org) supports communities across the state.

The Indianapolis Liberation Center (<https://indyliberationcenter.org/about/>) facilitates community collaboration and works to develop policy solutions to systemic issues including housing inequality and labor exploitation. Community collaboration to meet individual needs is vital and necessary support. Policy-focused organizations are a useful complement to community action.

But real change comes from the top. The key first step is recognizing the issue: homelessness is not a “punishment” for an individual’s choices. Homelessness and housing inequality is systemic, purposeful cruelty. No real change will come until lawmakers recognize this and involve unhoused people in developing solutions. As the maxim goes: *Nothing about us without us.*



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Homelessness and Housing Organizational Profiles

Authors

Introduction by **MAHASIN AMEEN**, Teaching and Learning Librarian, Indiana University Indianapolis

List Compiled by **H. JAD REA**, MLIS Student, Indiana University Indianapolis

The United Nations estimates that globally 1.6 billion people live in inadequate housing conditions (UN-Habitat, 2022). Many of those people live without access to basic services and sanitation, and struggle with housing costs. Housing insecurity is a global issue, but often we fail to understand the complexities. The United Nations (2023) defines homelessness as:

Persons living in the streets, in open spaces or cars; persons living in temporary emergency accommodation, in women's shelters, in camps or other temporary accommodation provided to internally displaced persons, refugees or migrants; and persons living in severely inadequate and insecure housing, such as residents of informal settlements.

This type of housing insecurity violates the very principle of inherent human dignity as established in articles 1 and 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The concept that all human beings are born equal and that each of us is entitled to social and cultural rights is an indispensable one for all humanity. Yet homelessness remains a global crisis and is experienced by members of our local communities as well. As citizens of a democracy, we should offer unwavering advocacy in support of a community-wide commitment of eliminating housing insecurity.

Housing insecurity does not discriminate by race, age, or gender, and could happen to any person. The challenges confront us all and could occur at any time, resulting in an unexpected information need. Looking for information and available resources is time consuming. Vetting organizations, determining eligibility and the scope of each entity can be a long, arduous process. The list with links below suggests resources that may be relevant to housing insecurity -- from

addressing basic hygiene needs to fighting generational poverty. While this list is not exhaustive, identified resources are from the United States, as well as the international ones offered by the United Nations.

UN-Habitat. (2022). Priorities 2022-2023: Adequate housing, cities and climate change, and localizing the sustainable development goals. United Nations. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2022/05/priorities_2022-2023_adequate_housing_cities_and_climate_change_and_localising_sdgs_04142022.pdf

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NORTH AMERICA UNITED STATES

Chapin Hall, University of Chicago: Voices of Youth Count (<https://voicesofyouthcount.org/>)

Supports communities across the United States and beyond – based in Chicago, IL

Mission: Voices of Youth Count is a national Chapin Hall initiative to bring actionable evidence to prevent and end youth homelessness.

Discover the initiative's four-phase strategy to preventing youth homelessness (<https://www.chapinhall.org/project/new-opportunities-the-youth-homelessness-prevention-initiative/>).

Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.

(enterprisecommunity.org)

Supports communities across all 50 states, Puerto Rico, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands

Mission: Our mission is to make home and community places of pride, power and belonging.

Learn more about Enterprise’s impact on systems, communities, and people across America (<https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/about/our-impact>).

HELP USA (helpusa.org)

Supports communities across New York City and Philadelphia – based in New York City, NY

Mission: HELP USA works to ensure that everyone has a place to call home.

Explore HELP USA’s resources for those facing homelessness, domestic violence, or are in danger of being evicted (<https://www.helpusa.org/get-help/>).

Housing Trust Funds Project (housingtrustfundproject.org)

Supports communities across the United States – based in Portland, OR

Mission: The Project operates as a clearinghouse of information on housing trust funds throughout the country, and provides technical assistance to organizations and agencies working to create or implement these funds.

Learn more about the process of proposing and organizing a housing trust fund (<https://housingtrustfundproject.org/campaigns/the-basics/>).

National ADAPT (nationaladapt.org)

Supports communities across the United States

Mission: ADAPT is a national grass-roots community that organizes disability rights activists to engage in nonviolent direct action, including civil disobedience, to assure the civil and human rights of people with disabilities to live in freedom.

Find your local group (<https://nationaladapt.org/adapt-groups/>).

National Alliance to End Homelessness (endhomelessness.org/)

Supports communities across the United States – based in Washington, D.C.

Mission: The National Alliance to End Homelessness is a nonpartisan organization committed to preventing and ending homelessness in the United States.

Learn to create a coordinated community-wide approach to address homelessness (<https://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/solutions/creating-systems-that-work/>).

National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) (nahro.org/)

Supports communities across the United States – based in Washington, D.C.

Mission: NAHRO members create and manage affordable housing for low- and middle-income families, and support vibrant communities that enhance the quality of life for all.

Learn how NAHRO’s Housing America Campaign raises awareness about affordable housing (<https://www.nahro.org/about/housingamerica/>).

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (nchv.org/)

Support communities across the United States – based in Washington, D.C.

Mission: The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) is the resource and technical assistance center for a national network of community-based service providers and local, state and federal agencies that provide emergency and supportive housing, food, health services, job training and placement assistance, legal aid and case management support for hundreds of thousands of homeless veterans each year.

Learn more about veteran homelessness in America (<https://nchv.org/veteran-homelessness/>).

National Health Care for the Homeless Council (nhchc.org/)

Supports communities across the United States – based in Nashville, TN

Mission: Grounded in human rights and social justice, the NHCHC mission is to build an equitable, high-quality health care system through training, research, and advocacy in the movement to end homelessness.

Explore NHCHC webinar and online resources for those working at the intersection of homelessness and healthcare (<https://nhchc.org/webinars/>).

National Homelessness Law Center (homelesslaw.org/)

Supports communities across the United States – based in Washington, D.C.

Mission: Fearlessly advance federal, state and local policies to prevent and end homelessness while fiercely defending the rights of all unhoused persons.

Read the Law Center’s evaluation of the United States response to housing and homelessness in 2023 (<https://homelesslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/ReportCard2023.pdf>).

National Housing Law Project (nhlp.org/)

Supports communities across the United States – offices in San Francisco, CA, and Washington, D.C.

Mission: The National Housing Law Project’s mission is to advance housing justice for poor people and communities.

Discover NHLP’s online resources for tenant rights and the housing movement (<https://www.nhlp.org/trainings-publications/>).

National Low Income Housing Coalition (nlihc.org/)

Supports communities across the United States – based in Washington, D.C.

Mission: NLIHC educates, organizes and advocates to ensure decent, affordable housing for everyone.

Explore housing needs by state (<https://nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state>).

National Rural Housing Coalition (<https://ruralhousingcoalition.org/>)

Supports communities across the United States – based in Washington, D.C.

Mission: NRHC works to promote and defend the principle that rural people have the right — regardless of income — to a decent, affordable place to live, clean drinking water, and basic community services.

Learn about NRHC’s legislative campaigns to meet rural housing needs (<https://ruralhousingcoalition.org/take-action/>).

NeighborWorks America (neighborworks.org/home)

Supports communities across the United States – based in Washington, D.C.

Mission: NeighborWorks America creates opportunities for people to live in affordable homes, improve their lives and strengthen their communities.

Explore a network of community nonprofits addressing housing issues (<https://www.neighborworks.org/Our-Network.aspx>).

Pathways Home (pathwayshome.org/)

Supports communities across Birmingham – based in Birmingham, AL

Mission: Empowering women and children on their path out of homelessness through hospitality, housing, and hope.

Explore Pathways programs for temporary and permanent housing for women and children experiencing homelessness (<https://www.pathwayshome.org/what-we-do/>).

Project HOPE (prohope.org/)

Supports communities across Boston – based in Boston, MA

Mission: Project HOPE Boston works in partnership with women and families in the Dorchester and Roxbury neighborhoods of Boston on their journeys up and out of poverty. We do this by being a catalyst for change in the lives of families, developing and providing programs and family support solutions to alleviate poverty and homelessness.

Discover Project HOPE Boston’s community impact (<https://www.prohope.org/impact#>).

Project Place (projectplace.org/)

Supports communities across Boston – based in Boston, MA

Mission: Project Place promotes a community of hope and opportunity for homeless and low-income individuals by providing the skills, education and resources needed to obtain and sustain employment and housing.

Explore Project Place’s skill development and employment readiness programs (<https://projectplace.org/how-we-help/>).

Prosperity Indiana (prosperityindiana.org)

Supports communities across Indiana -- based in Indianapolis, IN

Mission: Prosperity Indiana organizes all of its work within its REAP Prosperity framework: providing Resources, opportunities for Engagement, Advocacy, and signature Programs that support members' work.

Learn more about Prosperity Indiana's work through their online resources and their ongoing webinar series: Legal Help for Housing Stability (<https://prosperityindiana.org/event-5453293>)

Purpose. Dignity. Action: JustCARE program (<https://wearepda.org/programs/justcare/>)

Supports communities across King County, WA – based in Seattle, WA

Mission: JustCARE is a response to the increase in people living unsheltered in vulnerable communities trying to rebound from the COVID economic crisis.

Discover how JustCARE helps transition participants into permanent, stable housing (<https://wearepda.org/justcare-an-analysis-of-housing-and-other-outcomes/>).

Raikes Foundation: Housing Stability for Youth (<https://www.raikesfoundation.org/what-we-do/housing-stability-for-youth>)

Supports communities across Washington state – based in Seattle, WA

Mission: The Raikes Foundation works with young people, multi-sector coalitions, and policymakers to not only respond

to youth and young adult homelessness in Washington State and across the U.S. but also to prevent it from happening in the first place.

Explore the Raikes Foundation’s support of the national Education Leads Home campaign (<https://educationleadshome.org/about-the-campaign/>).

Resident Owned Communities (ROC) USA (<https://rocusa.org/about-roc-usa/mission-history/>)

Supports communities across the United States – based in Concord, NH

Mission: ROC USA® was launched in May 2008 by national and regional nonprofits that joined together to serve one mission: To make quality resident ownership viable nationwide and to expand economic opportunities for homeowners in manufactured (mobile) home communities.

Learn about ROC USA’s impact from residents and community members on the ground (<https://rocusa.org/stories/the-opportunity-to-really-have-it-all/>).

Spokane Homeless Coalition (<http://www.spokanehc.com/>)

Supports communities across the Greater Spokane area – based in Spokane, WA

Mission: The Spokane Homeless Coalition is made up of more than 1300 individuals representing more than 200 agencies, meal sites, churches and ministries in the Greater Spokane area, all committed to serving those in need throughout our community.

Explore a network of community organizations providing support for individuals experiencing homelessness in the Spokane area (<http://www.spokanehc.com/finding-help.html>).

Urban Institute (<https://www.urban.org/>)

Supporting communities across the United States – based in Washington, D.C.

Mission: To open minds, shape decisions, and offer solutions through economic and social policy research.

Explore the Urban Institute’s Data Tools to inform decisions and shape policy (<https://www.urban.org/data-tools>).

CANADA

Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa (<https://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca/>)

Supports communities across Ottawa – based in Ottawa, ON

Mission: The Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa is a member-driven coalition of people and organizations working together to end homelessness through systems planning and coordination, public education and advocacy, and community-wide mobilization.

Explore how the Alliance is building a political foundation through the city-wide Starts With Home campaign (https://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca/starts_with_home_campaign).

Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (<https://caeh.ca/>)

Supports communities across Canada – based in Calgary, AB

Mission: The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness leads a national movement of individuals, organizations and communities working together to end homelessness in Canada.

Discover the Built for Zero Canada strategy to educate, engage, and mobilize communities to end chronic homelessness and veteran homelessness (<https://bfzcanada.ca/getting-to-zero/>).

Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (<https://www.homelesshub.ca/OFHA>)

Supports communities across Canada – based in Toronto, ON

Mission: The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) is a non-partisan research and policy partnership between academics, policy and decision makers, service providers and people with lived experience of homelessness.

Learn more about recent research on the lack of affordable housing for Black communities in the Vancouver, BC, area (<https://www.homelesshub.ca/blog/lack-affordable-housing-black-communities-metro-vancouver>).

Engage and Change (<https://engageandchange.org/>)

Supports communities across Toronto – based in Toronto, ON

Mission: Engage and Change gives people and companies the opportunities to do hands on group volunteer projects that assemble and build kits to assist in the alleviation of poverty.

Learn about Project Water, a hands-on initiative to address rates of unhoused people who die from dehydration every summer (<https://engageandchange.org/project-water/>).

Hands Up Canada (<http://handsupcanada.ca/>)

Supports communities across northern Canada – based in Toronto, ON

Mission: Hands Up Canada supports education in ensuring that students from poor, underemployed and disadvantaged families and communities have quality learning supplies along with the adequate nutrition, motivation and encouragement to pursue their studies and improve their future opportunities. Learn more about support for individuals living in poverty, including hygiene items and shelter (<http://handsupcanada.ca/projects/2764-2/>).

The Period Purse (<https://www.theperiodpurse.com/>)

Supports communities in Ontario and other provinces – based in Toronto, ON

Mission: The Period Purse creates menstrual equity by ensuring sustainable access to period products for all, and by ending the stigma associated with periods through education and advocacy.

Explore how the Period Purse reaches out to and partners with First Nations communities to make menstrual care accessible (<https://www.theperiodpurse.com/indigenous-communities.html>).

The Shoebox Project for Women (<https://www.shooboxproject.ca/home>)

Supports communities across Canada – based in Toronto, ON

Mission: To uplift and empower women who are experiencing or at-risk-of homelessness through in-kind support, education, and community participation.

Learn how to make a Shoebox Gift (<https://www.shooboxproject.ca/how-to-make-a-shoobox>).

Quest Food Exchange (<https://www.questoutreach.org/>)

Supports communities across British Columbia – based in Vancouver, BC

Mission: By bridging the gap between food banks and traditional grocery stores, Quest provides a grocery experience based on principles of dignity, access, and sustainability.

Learn about the upcoming 2023 Holiday Hamper Drive (<https://www.questoutreach.org/blog/holiday-volunteer/>).

MEXICO

Mi Valedor (<https://www.mivaledor.com/en/home-english/>)

Supports communities across Mexico City – based in Colonia Juárez, Mexico City

Mission: To build a healthy community with the valedores, in which workshops are imparted to strengthen their skills, and to collectively create a cultural magazine, the sales of which allow them to generate additional income.

Browse articles from the current and archived issues of their street magazine, Mi Valedor (<https://www.mivaledor.com/en/category/magazine/>).

Promoción y Acción Comunitaria I.A.P. (PACO) (<https://pacoiap.org/>)

Supports communities across Mexico City – based in

Mission: To help vulnerable people through three assistance programs directed at children, youths, adults, and elderly people, including support for food, education, health, housing, and clothing with the goal of that community assistance leading to better living conditions.

Discover PACO’s current and past programs (<https://pacoiap.org/index.php/programas>).

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Homeless World Cup (<https://www.homelessworldcup.org/>)

Supporting communities across the world – based in Edinburgh, Scotland

Listen to their podcast interviews with activists and leaders working on the ground (<https://www.homelessworldcup.org/podcast>).

International Network of Street Papers

(<https://www.insp.ngo/>)

Supporting independent journalists across the world – based in Glasgow, Scotland

Mission: To support the global street paper network to alleviate poverty and build a movement for social change.

Find your local street paper (<https://www.insp.ngo/network>).

NIGERIA

Brickify Ltd. (<https://www.facebook.com/RealBrickify>)
([website under construction](#))

Supports communities in Lagos and beyond – based in Lagos, LA

Mission: Brickify recycles plastic waste bags into building bricks and lumber that are used to construct roads and build low-cost housing in Nigeria.

Watch Brickify turn plastic waste into a sofa (<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1935964536758786>).

Homeless Not Hopeless Nigeria (<http://hnhnigeria.org.ng/>)

Supporting communities in Ibadan and beyond – based at the University of Ibadan, OY

Mission: Homeless Not Hopeless Nigeria is a student-led non-profit organization founded in May 2020 to address the issue of homelessness and its numerous ugly consequences in Nigeria.

Read about the intersection of homelessness and mental health (<http://hnhnigeria.org.ng/Monthly-Articles/>).

INDIA

Pehchan India (<https://pehchanindia.org/>)

Supports communities across Mumbai – based in Mumbai, MH

Mission:

Learn more about the My Mumbai Project (in partnership with MyLondon/Cafe Art), which distributed cameras to unhoused individuals in Mumbai and created a photograph exhibit to share their stories (<https://www.cafeart.org.uk/post/how-did-mymumbai-go>).

Salaam Baalak Trust (SBT) Delhi

(<https://www.salaambaalaktrust.com/>)

Supports communities across Delhi – based in New Delhi, DL

Mission: SBT provides a sensitive and caring environment for street and working children, and those in difficult circumstances. It seeks to provide a platform for children to realize their full potential, their right to a safe and secure space, education, and health and nutrition.

Learn about the Trust's City Walk tours, led by formerly unhoused children and teens who share stories of their lives on the streets of New Delhi's neighborhoods (<https://www.salaambaalaktrust.com/city-walks.php>).

EUROPEAN UNION

FEANSTA (<https://www.feantsa.org/en/about-us/what-is-feantsa>)

Supporting communities across the European Union – based in Brussels, Belgium

Mission: We are the only European NGO focusing exclusively on the fight against homelessness. Our ultimate goal is an end to homelessness in Europe.

Discover FEANSTA's past and current projects with partners across the EU (<https://www.feantsa.org/en/activities/projects>).



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