



Funders Together

TO END HOMELESSNESS



Policy Alert

What's Happening: HUD Incentives Best Practices with New Funding to Address Unsheltered Homelessness

This week the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) [announced a package of program and voucher funding](#) totaling \$365M to support people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. In addition to 4,000 new incremental vouchers, the program components of the package incentivize communities to make efforts to advance racial equity and to serve individuals and families with significant service needs experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

[Communities can apply for funding](#) for permanent housing, supportive services, HMIS, and/or planning through the Unsheltered Homelessness and Rural Homelessness Set Asides. All projects funded through these set asides will be required to follow a Housing First approach. Communities that reported more than 5,000 people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the 2019 PIT count will be ranked higher through the application process.

As of last year, Native American tribes are eligible recipients of Continuum of Care funding and this opportunity, as outlined below, can and should be leveraged to support tribes and Native American communities that do not have any or adequate homeless services available to them.

Notably, HUD included several guidelines regarding systems change that are the first of their kind, several of which have the potential to contribute to racial justice and housing justice:

- Communities are incentivized to create projects that serve individuals and families in geographic areas that have high levels of homelessness, housing distress, or poverty, and are located where Continuum of Care (CoC) services have until now been entirely unavailable, such as, for example, Trust Lands and Indian Reservations.
- Applicants must identify the steps they will take to ensure that traditionally marginalized populations (such as racial and ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities) will be able to meaningfully participate in the planning process;
- CoCs are asked to review their strategies to support and serve underserved communities in their geographic area, identify barriers that led to any disparities in communities being served, and take steps to eliminate these barriers. This includes, in conjunction with people experiencing homelessness, reviewing local policies, procedures, and processes to determine where and how to address disparities affecting underserved communities experiencing homelessness

These practices, if adopted with integrity and in community with people of color with lived experience of homelessness, have the potential to begin curbing racial disparities in outcomes for people from communities who have been marginalized and are navigating homeless service systems.

How Philanthropy Can Take Action

Over the coming weeks and months, Continuum of Care partners will be working hard to gather information, solicit guidance from members of the community, and develop funding applications for these set aside projects. At the same time, public housing authorities will be asked to strengthen their connections to homeless service systems in order to effectively prioritize the new vouchers for those experiencing or at risk of unsheltered homelessness.

With the October 30 deadline for these new CoC program funds in sight, philanthropy is well-positioned to utilize its convening power to bring together stakeholders and communities partners and also address the capacity needs to ensure that CoC partners are able to support people with lived experience in leading and guiding these efforts. The policy priorities outlined above offer some much-needed guidance on the path forward for centering racial equity in our work to prevent and end homelessness.

While this opportunity is fast-approaching, **Funders Together encourages our members to think creatively about providing flexible support to your community and holding accountability to ensure this moment is leveraged to advance housing justice and make significant improvements to policy and practice in pursuit of racial justice.**

Focusing on the Long-Term Vision: Centering Dignity in Local Encampment Policy and Advocacy

While federal partners hope to spur reductions in unsheltered homelessness through these new funding opportunities and policy priorities, some states and cities are adopting harmful, ineffective, and degrading policies to manage unsheltered homelessness. These tools of oppression are modeled from centuries of systemic anti-Black racism in the United States and will ensure that the disproportionate impact of homelessness on communities of color will continue on in these communities and states.

Encampment sweeps, camping bans, use of law enforcement, surveillance, harassment, arrests, and mandatory shelter and service participation are all tactics that are currently weaponized against people, especially Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, who are experiencing homelessness in communities across the country. The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness released guidance last week offering [seven best practices](#) for addressing encampments. Importantly, the guidance noted:

"Some communities turn to strategies that use aggressive law enforcement approaches that criminalize homelessness, or they close encampments without offering shelter or housing options. These approaches result in adverse health outcomes, exacerbate racial disparities, and create traumatic stress, loss of identification and belongings, and disconnection from much-needed services. While these efforts may have the short-term effect of clearing an encampment from public view, without connection to adequate shelter, housing, and supportive services, they will not succeed."

Some groups are [selling these ineffective and harmful policies](#) to state and local government officials. While unsheltered homelessness is posing unprecedented challenges to our communities, our values must remain front and center as we respond to the crisis and envision new ways forward, rooted in housing justice for all.

At our [2022 Funders Institute](#) on July 25-27, we are hosting a session focused on alternatives to the tactic of policing to address unsheltered homelessness. We'll dive into the complexity of criminalization and policing by exploring how funders have grappled with this issue in their community and examine promising alternative models rooted in equity and justice.

Join the conversation and register for our [2022 Funders Institute here](#).



Policy Resource Round-Up

- **Funders Together to End Homelessness:** [2022 Funders Institute Agenda](#)
- **Journal of General Internal Medicine:** [Health Impacts of Street Sweeps from the Perspective of Healthcare Providers](#)
- **National Alliance to End Homelessness:** [HUD Creates New Funding Opportunity to Address Unsheltered and Rural Homelessness](#)
- **National Low Income Housing Coalition:** [Housing First Toolkit](#)
- **The Pew Charitable Trust:** [Homeless Camping Bans Are Spreading. This Group Shaped the Bills](#)
- **United States Interagency Council on Homelessness:** [7 Principles for Addressing Encampments](#)
- **Urban Institute:** [Homelessness Is a Housing and Racism Problem](#)

As always, we are here to answer your questions or provide insights on public policy developments and opportunities. Please reach out to me or [Amanda](#) at any time.

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[Funders Together to End Homelessness](#)

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