



# Funders Together

## TO END HOMELESSNESS



### Policy Alert

#### **What's Happening: Recent Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness | 2023 PIT Count Released**

As 2023 closes out and an election year is upon us, we continue to see people experiencing homelessness feeling the impacts of harmful political and public narratives, resulting in fatal consequences. While some politicians work to defund our most needed resources, police forces and vigilantes alike are dehumanizing and harming people experiencing homelessness every day.

In the past couple of weeks, four people experiencing homelessness were killed in two unrelated shootings in [Los Angeles](#) and [Las Vegas](#). Among those murdered, Shawn Alvarez (52), Jose Bolanos (37), and Mark Diggs (62) of Los Angeles were killed while sleeping outside. Authorities in Las Vegas have not publicly identified the victim killed there. These are the latest violent tragedies reflecting the decades-long moral failure across our communities to protect the most vulnerable.

These tragedies aren't separate from the recent [release of the Point-in-Time Count](#) numbers which show a [12 percent increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness](#). The truth is, as these PIT count numbers show, more of our neighbors are struggling. The more people who are without homes, the more likely we are to see an increase in violent attacks on those who are unhoused, in part from the continual harmful narrative being broadcasted by some in an attempt to untruthfully connect crime and homelessness.

That's why now more than ever everyone in our communities need a safe home to thrive. This is foundational to better communities, especially those who are [BIPOC, LGBTQ, and other marginalized people impacted by discrimination and racism](#). These increases aren't because evidence-based solutions like Housing First don't work, but rather are the result of rising home costs, people not earning enough to keep up, and proven solutions not funded at scale due to the lack of political will.

**We know how to solve homelessness and when we make the political and public choice to do so, only then will we see better communities where housing justice is realized.** And we have examples of where the hard work of organizations and people on the ground brought about the political and public will that [led to a decrease in homelessness](#) - despite an overall national increase. Abundant resources are desperately needed from both the public and private sectors to not only protect people experiencing

homelessness from harm, but to ensure that they have the option to be safely housed and supported so they can thrive in an inclusive community.

## How Philanthropy Can Take Action

It is critical that our policy advocacy and public education efforts keep pace with the uptick in harmful narratives about homelessness and housing injustice that are sure to increase during the election cycle. [As outlined in previous updates](#), some members of Congress are pushing to undermine best practices and racially equitable priorities related to the work of preventing and ending homelessness, but advocates are also making strides moving toward housing justice.

Late last month, Senators Markey (D-MA) and Padilla (D-CA), introduced the [Housing Alignment and Coordination of Critical and Effective Supportive Health Services \(Housing ACCESS\) Act](#), following months of diligent advocacy led by the National Alliance to End Homelessness and Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH). The act, if passed, would streamline housing assistance and rental subsidies with tenancy support services by encouraging alignment and policy improvement across Medicaid agencies, public housing agencies, Continuums of Care, and housing finance agencies.

**If you can engage in direct lobbying as a public foundation or United Way**, we urge you to call on your Members of the House of Representatives to express support for the Housing ACCESS Act as well as the [Unhoused Bill of Rights](#).

**If you are a private foundation or unable to partake in direct lobbying activities**, contact local policymakers to educate and inform them about what risks people experiencing homelessness are facing in your area and how funding cuts and violent policies perpetuate housing instability, crisis, and homelessness in your community.

*Remember: Public and private foundations may educate legislators about a broad range of issues without referencing or providing views on specific legislation. Public and private foundations can also provide capacity for grantee partners to contact their Representatives and Senators on behalf of their community.*

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## Focusing on the Long-Term Vision: Being Abundant with Resources and Influence To Advance Housing Justice

Harmful politically-motivated narratives about people experiencing homelessness will only increase over the next year as homelessness continues to be a political opportunity to “other” those in our community that have been failed by systems. As an election year is upon us, we know that housing and homelessness are situated to be top campaign issues. To prepare for what’s ahead next year, we must take time to sit with how we must work differently and collectively to achieve housing justice across the country.

As leaders in philanthropy consider what to prioritize over the next year, we encourage you to reposition and strengthen your leadership to advocate for housing justice as a foundation for thriving and healthy communities.

We can end homelessness. It is solvable. We must be flexible and abundant with resources and policies and work to pivot to a more responsive and supportive posture when grantees and historically marginalized communities identify their unmet needs. Philanthropy has the opportunity to model for the nation how to take on a humanitarian crisis with integrity and rise to meet the moment with courage, compassion, and principles.

In the coming months, we will explore how we can bolster our collective advocacy by keeping people at the center of our efforts and how philanthropy can be bold, not only during an election cycle, but for generational impact.

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## Policy Resource Round-Up

- **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:**
  - [House Appropriations Bills for 2024 Cut a Swath Through Crucial Programs, Deviate Sharply From Agreed Levels](#)
- **National Alliance to End Homelessness:**
  - [HUD Releases 2023 AHAR Data: 12 Key Data Points to Understand the Current State of Homelessness in America](#)
  - [The Housing ACCESS Act: A Pathway to Supportive Housing](#)
  - [The Disturbing Realities of Homelessness and Violence](#)
- **National Homelessness Law Center:**
  - [Law Center Statement on Today's United Nations Report Decrying Ongoing Human Rights Abuses Against Unhoused People](#)
- **True Colors United:**
  - [Homelessness Increasing Among Trans Youth](#)
- **United States Interagency Council on Homelessness:**
  - [2023: A Year of Federal Action to Address the Nation's Homelessness Crisis](#)

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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