

HOMELESSNESS IS SOLVABLE

ACTION TOOLKIT

COMMUNITY
SOLUTIONS

No single solution can end homelessness — but the full force of a community can. You can get involved to accelerate an end to homelessness.

Communities are proving that we can break with the status quo and deliver on a promise of a home for all.

This work is not easy. Achieving and sustaining this new normal requires new systems, different decisions, and **the full force of a community demanding it.**

This toolkit builds on learning from the Built for Zero movement to detail actions you can take to support progress in your community.

What is Built for Zero?

Built for Zero is a movement of more than 100 communities committed to measurably ending homelessness — and proving that it is possible.

Built for Zero communities have adopted a data-driven methodology to change how homeless response systems work and the impact they can achieve.

How do we know homelessness is solvable?

Fueled by collaboration and data, nearly half of those cities and counties have driven reductions in a population of people experiencing homelessness.

Communities in Built for Zero have designed operating systems that can make homelessness rare and brief at a population level.

HOMELESSNESS IS SOLVABLE

Communities in the Built for Zero movement are proving it.

105

communities are participating in Built for Zero

147,000+

individuals housed by Built for Zero communities since 2015

14

communities have functionally ended homelessness for a population

64

communities have achieved quality real-time data

42

communities have achieved a measurable reduction



[SEE OUR INTERACTIVE MAP](#)

We can create a future
where homelessness is never inevitable
or a way of life.

Many communities are already on their way.

*"When you start to
tackle homelessness
one person at a time...
**this overwhelming
problem starts to be
solvable.**"*

— **Heather Kimmel**
Bakersfield, California
First community in California to reach functional zero for veterans



1. Promote a new understanding of homelessness

Homelessness is a systems problem.

Read and share [this post](#) on why the solution to ending homelessness lies in redesigning our systems.

Spread the word:

Homelessness is a result of the systems we've designed and the decisions we've collectively made. We have the power to design new systems and make different decisions.

*#HomelessnessIsSolvable #WorldHomelessnessWeek
community.solutions/why-is-homelessness-a-systems-problem*

TWEET

Homelessness cannot be ended without addressing racial inequity.

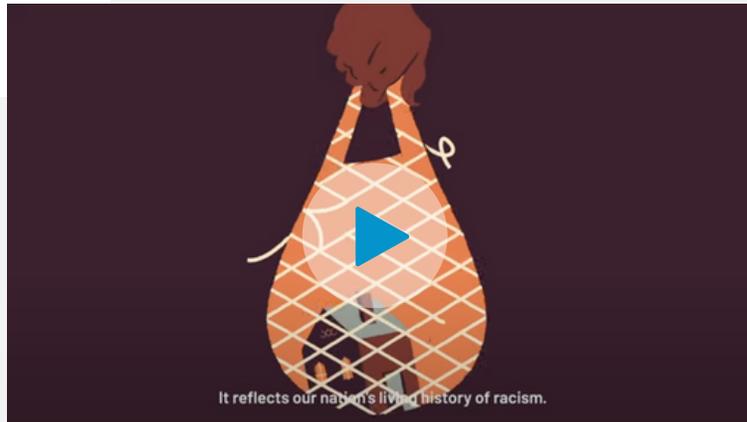
Homelessness is an immediate, life-threatening crisis for the people experiencing it, but not all racial and ethnic groups are impacted equally. In the U.S., Native and Black Americans are disproportionately impacted by homelessness.

We worked with local homeless services leaders and people who experienced homelessness to develop a **framework** for understanding and improving the racial equity of a community's homeless response system.



Ending homelessness is a matter of racial equity and justice.

Watch and share this video, created by the [National Racial Equity Working Group](#).



Spread the word:

Homelessness is a reflection of failing systems, racism, and how society fails our most marginalized neighbors.

When we end homelessness, it reflects our power to reimagine systems, realize racial justice, and leave no one behind.

youtube.com/watch?v=vISKMvSZCas
[#HomelessnessIsSolvable](#) [#WorldHomelessnessWeek](#)

[TWEET](#)

Did you know?

Homelessness is a racial justice issue. Research shows that Black and Native Americans experience homelessness at disproportionately high rates, even when we control for disparities in poverty level.

Homelessness is solvable.

Explore [this page](#) with examples of communities that are working to reduce and end homelessness for populations. You can also [watch this video](#), which provides an overview of the methodology communities across the country are adopting to solve homelessness.



Spread the word:

Solving homelessness is not just an aspiration. It's an achievable reality. Communities across the country are proving it.

[#HomelessnessIsSolvable](#) [#WorldHomelessnessWeek](#)
homelessnessissolvable.org

TWEET

Spread the word:

Communities across the country are demonstrating that [#HomelessnessIsSolvable](#) when they take a systems approach to measurably and equitably ending homelessness.

[#WorldHomelessnessWeek](#)
youtube.com/watch?v=LKDHLMIInprI

TWEET

Graphics to include with your social posts

Download images by using right-click > "Save image as..."



Facebook/Instagram



Facebook/Instagram



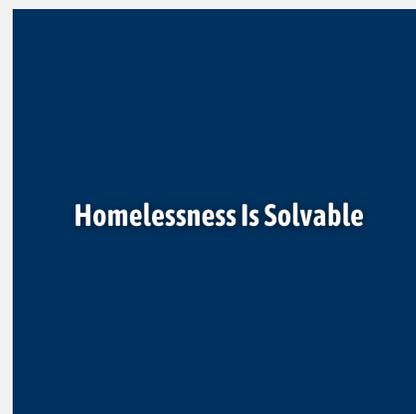
Twitter



Twitter



GIF Facebook/Instagram



GIF Facebook/Instagram



GIF Twitter



GIF Twitter

2. Support local organizations

Explore your local homeless response system and learn how you can support them.

Use our [interactive map](#) to see if your community is participating in Built for Zero. Identify the organizations that are a part of the effort and see how you can support them.

Spread the word:

Proud to see that [[@ community name]] is a @BuiltForZero community dedicated to measurably and equitably solving homelessness. We can create a future where homelessness is rare and brief, for all.

#HomelessnessIsSolvable

TWEET

If your community is not in Built for Zero, you can start by looking up the **Continuum of Care (CoC)** that serves your area.

What is a Continuum of Care?

A Continuum of Care (CoC) is the most structured piece of the homeless response system, which receives funding from The Department of Housing and Urban Development.



HUD designed the CoC structure to promote community-wide planning and strategic use of resources to address homelessness by nonprofits, state and local governments, and other service providers.

What is a homeless response system?

CoC's are one of the leaders within a broader system of homelessness response. This system refers to the various organizations and entities within an area that serve homeless individuals and families.



These providers can include nonprofit organizations, housing authorities, local and federal government agencies, faith-based organizations, the VA, shelter providers, and other homeless coalitions.

3. Create accountability for measurably and equitably ending homelessness

Find out if your city or county has a commitment to measurably and equitably ending homelessness, and hold it accountable for making progress toward that goal.

What is functional zero?

Many communities across the country have set a goal of achieving a milestone known as **functional zero**.

Achieving and sustaining functional zero indicates that systems that can can continuously **keep homelessness rare and brief for an entire population**.



How does your community measure progress?

Though almost every city has a strategic plan for ending homelessness, these plans often define success by outputs, program measures, or interventions. Or they may rely on annual point-in-time counts to measure success in these efforts, even though **homelessness is a dynamic problem that changes every night**.



[Learn how communities are shifting toward real-time, person-specific data to catalyze change.](#)

Demand better data

Success must be measured by whether the **number of people experiencing homelessness is going down, month over month**, and whether that work is producing equitable outcomes.

Find out if your community is releasing that number publicly, every month. If not, **advocate for your community to join the cities and counties across the country moving toward quality, real-time data.**



Elected leaders are demonstrating that they have a critical role to play in helping communities measurably and equitably end homelessness.



Ask your elected officials the following questions:



Do we have a commitment to **population-level reductions** in homelessness as the critical measure of success in our city/county?



Is the city or county **publishing its cumulative numbers of people experiencing homelessness**, and updating it month over month?



Does the city/county have a **shared aim of functionally ending homelessness** for any population?



Is the community currently **driving population-level reductions** in homelessness, and how would we know?



How will this [**effort, investment, intervention**] help communities drive population-level reductions in homelessness?



Is **real-time, by-name data informing these decisions**, and where is that data coming from?



Get involved and see how others, like business leaders, faith-based organizations, and journalists, are using their unique influence to create a future where homelessness is rare and brief.

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