UNTIL WE'RE ALL HOME.

A FILM SERIES ABOUT SOLVING HOMELESSNESS

DISCUSSION & ACTION GUIDE

UNTILWEREALLHOME.COM

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How to use this guide

Thank you for taking the time to watch *Until We're All Home* and for considering its impact within your organization, team, community, classroom, or group. This guide is designed to facilitate discussions and encourage dialogue to enhance viewers' understanding of effective solutions to homelessness in the United States — driving collective action toward these practices. It centers on addressing the critical issue of homelessness, highlighting communities' resilience, and aiming to deepen viewers' understanding of the systemic challenges and solutions presented in the film.

Whether you choose to screen the full film or one or more of the chapters, this guide is tailored to help guide your discussion. Please refer to the respective pages for detailed insights and questions:

- **Full Film** (p. 14)
- **Chapter-Specific** (p. 15-20)

Film & series overview

Efforts to make homelessness rare and brief are broad and varied, just like the problem itself. However, successful practices that help individuals out of homelessness and reduce it across entire communities often remain unseen. This film aims to change that.

Community Solutions collaborated with filmmakers Dewi Sungai and Jason Houston (eight16creative) to document the stories of how six U.S. communities are measurably reducing homelessness as part of the Built for Zero movement. This series showcases what it looks like to take a solutions-focused approach to homelessness and highlights the work of those playing critical roles in these communities.

The recent Supreme Court decision in **Johnson v. Grants Pass** presents a choice: communities can either criminalize homelessness or implement proven, compassionate solutions. This series provides pragmatic, actionable guidance for those seeking humane and cost-effective ways to address homelessness.

Until We're All Home is a mosaic of stories about solving homelessness, told by people working to tackle this complex social problem, one day at a time. They are neighbors, formerly unhoused individuals, local leaders, social workers, veterans, landlords, and young adults, all playing a role in this crucial endeavor.

Collected over six months, this film offers an unseen perspective on one of our society's most pressing issues. It captures the power of collaboration and resilience in solving homelessness and underscores our profound need for empathy and community. Each episode of *Until We're All Home* follows a different city and storyline, providing a brief overview of each city's key themes and storytellers.

Letter from community solutions

Dear Viewers,

It is with great pride and excitement that I introduce you to *Until We're All Home*, a film series created by <u>Community Solutions</u> in partnership with the talented filmmakers Dewi Sungai and Jason Houston of <u>eight16 creative</u>. This series showcases what it looks like to take a solutions-focused approach to homelessness as a community and highlights the work of those playing critical roles in these efforts.

In light of the recent Supreme Court decision allowing the criminalization of homelessness, the series provides pragmatic, actionable and compassionate guidance for those seeking sensible, humane, and cost-effective alternatives.

At Community Solutions, our mission has always been to address homelessness through innovative, compassionate, and results-focused approaches. <u>The Built for Zero movement</u>, which serves as the foundation for this film series, embodies our commitment to helping communities make **homelessness rare and brief**. By sharing the stories of people who have experienced homelessness, dedicated social workers and landlords, visionary leaders, and collaborative partners, we aim to highlight the power of community and the possibility of real, lasting change.

Until We're All Home is more than just a collection of films; it is a call to action. The series showcases the diverse efforts and successes of six cities and counties as they work toward **functional zero homelessness**. From the resilience of Ralph in Fremont County, Colorado, to the unwavering dedication of social workers like Tnanita in Minneapolis, Minnesota, each story is a testament to the strength and determination of individuals committed to making a difference.

This discussion and action guide is designed to help you navigate and utilize the films to advance solutions to homelessness in your community and through your networks. We hope this guide will inspire you to explore the key themes, data, and personal stories highlighted in this series and take action toward making homelessness rare and brief.

Thank you for joining us on this journey and for your commitment to being part of the solution.

Warm regards,

Rosanne Haggerty
President, Community Solutions

Letter from the filmmakers

Dear Viewers,

We are thrilled to present *Until We're All Home*, a film series that we had the privilege of creating in partnership with Community Solutions. Our journey across six U.S. cities and counties, documenting the stories of individuals and communities working to end homelessness, has been profoundly moving and inspiring.

Through our lenses, we aimed to capture the raw and authentic voices of people who have experienced homelessness, the dedicated social workers who support them, the leaders challenging the status quo, and the partners who bring resources and guidance to this crucial mission. Our goal was to shed light on the complexity and diversity of efforts being made to solve homelessness and to illustrate the power of community, resilience, and compassion.

When we first embarked on this project, we were driven by a desire to bring visibility to the often-overlooked narratives of those affected by homelessness. **We wanted to go beyond statistics and stereotypes to reveal the human stories behind the issue.** Each episode in this series reflects our commitment to storytelling that is both respectful and impactful, aiming to evoke empathy and inspire action.

The filmmaking process involved extensive collaboration with the subjects of the films, ensuring **their stories were told with authenticity and dignity.** We sought to create an intimate portrayal of their lives and struggles, using our craft to highlight the nuances and emotional depth of their experiences. Our approach was not just to document but to build trust with the communities, **create safe spaces for people to tell their stories in their own way, and learn from their resilience and innovations.**

We believe that films have the power to change perceptions and ignite conversations. *Until We're All Home* is our contribution to the ongoing dialogue about homelessness, and we hope it serves as **a catalyst for understanding and change.**

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Community Solutions team for partnering with us to amplify these important stories. Their dedication and vision have been instrumental in bringing this project to life.

Thank you for joining us in this journey. We believe that through shared understanding and collective action, we can make a significant difference in addressing homelessness in the United States.

Warm regards,

Dewi Sungai & Jason Houston
Filmmakers, eight16 creative

Glossary

Built for Zero: a movement, a methodology, and proof that solutions are possible. Over 100 participating cities and counties have committed to measurably ending homelessness for entire populations. Using data, they have changed how local homeless response systems work and the impact they can achieve. Together, they are proving that we can build a future where homelessness is rare overall and brief when it occurs. (Source)

By-Name Data: By-name data (sometimes referred to as a by-name list) is a comprehensive data source of every person in a community experiencing homelessness, updated in real time. Using secure information collected and shared with their consent, each person on the list has a file that includes their name, homeless history, health, and housing needs. This data is updated monthly, at minimum, and enables the collaboration and accountability that leads to results. (Source)

Chronic Homelessness: the experience of those who have been homeless while struggling with a serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or physical disability. These individuals live in impermanent and inhabitable places, and have been unhoused for at least a year, or repeatedly within the recent past. (Source I, Source II)

Continuum of Care (CoC): The CoC Program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is designed to assist individuals (including unaccompanied youth) and families experiencing homelessness and provide the services needed to help such individuals move into transitional and permanent housing. It provides funding for local services and aims to promote community-wide planning and strategic use of resources to address homelessness. Every U.S. community is located within a CoC, which also has responsibility for collecting data on homelessness within their geography and coordinating the efforts of organizations responding to homelessness. (Source)

Coordinated Entry System (CES): The process that standardizes the way individuals and families at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness are assessed for and referred to the housing and services that they need.

Functional Zero: Functional zero is a milestone, which must be sustained over time, that indicates homelessness is rare and brief for a population, such as veterans or families. When it's achieved, it means that a community has systems in place to prevent most homelessness and quickly resolve new housing crises, making homelessness rare and brief for that population. (Source)

Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS): a software system used to track information on people experiencing homelessness and their needs, as well as the provision of housing and services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness and at risk of it. Each CoC is responsible for maintaining an HMIS software system that complies with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards. (Source)

Key themes

The affordable housing crisis in the U.S.

- Housing is both the root of the problem of homelessness and one of the key solutions.
- The shortage of housing is a fundamental cause of homelessness, highlighting the need for systemic solutions.

Limited access to health care — both physical and mental — perpetuates homelessness.

- Inadequate access to physical and mental healthcare exacerbates the challenges faced by individuals experiencing homelessness.

Misconceptions of homelessness and people who experience it.

- Stereotypes and misunderstandings about homelessness contribute to stigma and hinder effective solutions.

Why learning from those with lived expertise is essential to designing and operating efficient homeless response solutions.

- Those with lived experience know what's working and what isn't. Their insights can improve local homeless systems.

How collaboration is the key to progress and lasting change.

- A team approach among the community stakeholders is crucial to solving homelessness.

What homelessness tells us about our society and how we live together.

- The issue of homelessness offers insights into broader societal values and the importance — and possibility — of communities coming together to solve complex problems.
- Leaders have a choice: the law now allows them to punish people for experiencing homelessness, but this won't solve the problem. Cities can make a different choice. By choosing proven solutions to homelessness, together we can create communities where everyone has a home.

Statistics & data on homelessness

Overall

Since 2016, 77 communities across the United States have achieved the Quality Data Standard for at least one subpopulation (e.g., Veterans, Chronic) or a broader population (all single adults). These communities now possess the capability to accurately understand the total number of actively homeless individuals, including detailed insights into the causes of both inflow and outflow.

Communities consistently report their data to Built for Zero on a monthly basis. This data is utilized in actionable dashboards and tools that allow communities to monitor the changes in the homeless population with greater frequency than relying on the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count.

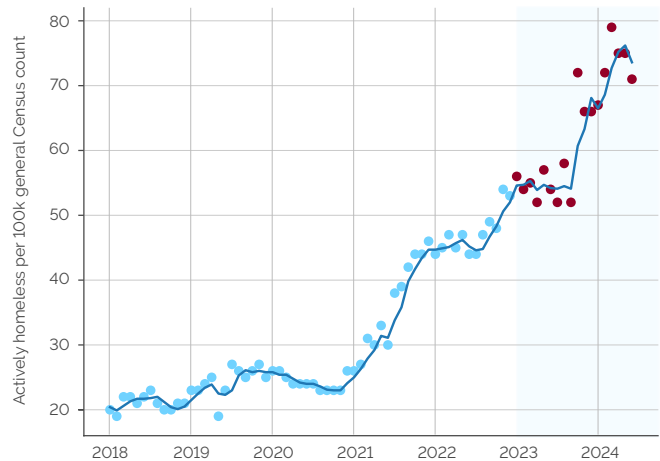HUD Chronically Homeless Count
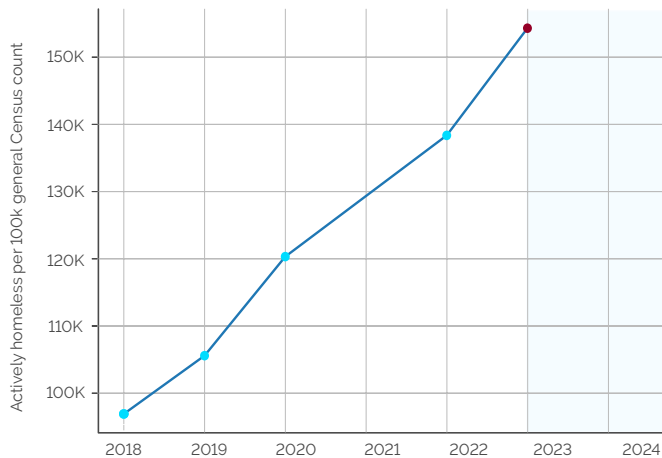
Data for 2021 does not display the total count of people experiencing homelessness due to pandemic-related disruptions to counts.

Data available from Jan 2023 to June 2024

BfZ Chronic Homeless Count

Counts are over a denominator of County-level Census and multiplied by 100k. Solid line represents a moving average over 6 periods.

Data available from Jan 2023 to June 2024

Statistics & data on homelessness

Estimated rate of homelessness in the United States in 2023, by state (per 10,000 population)

State	Homeless people per 10,000
Washington, DC	72.5
New York	52.7
Vermont	50.9
Oregon	47.6
California	46.6
Hawaii	43.4
Washington	35.9
Alaska	35.6
Maine	30.5
Massachusetts	27.3
Nevada	27.1
Colorado	24.6
Montana	19.2
Arizona	19.2
New Mexico	18.2

(Source)
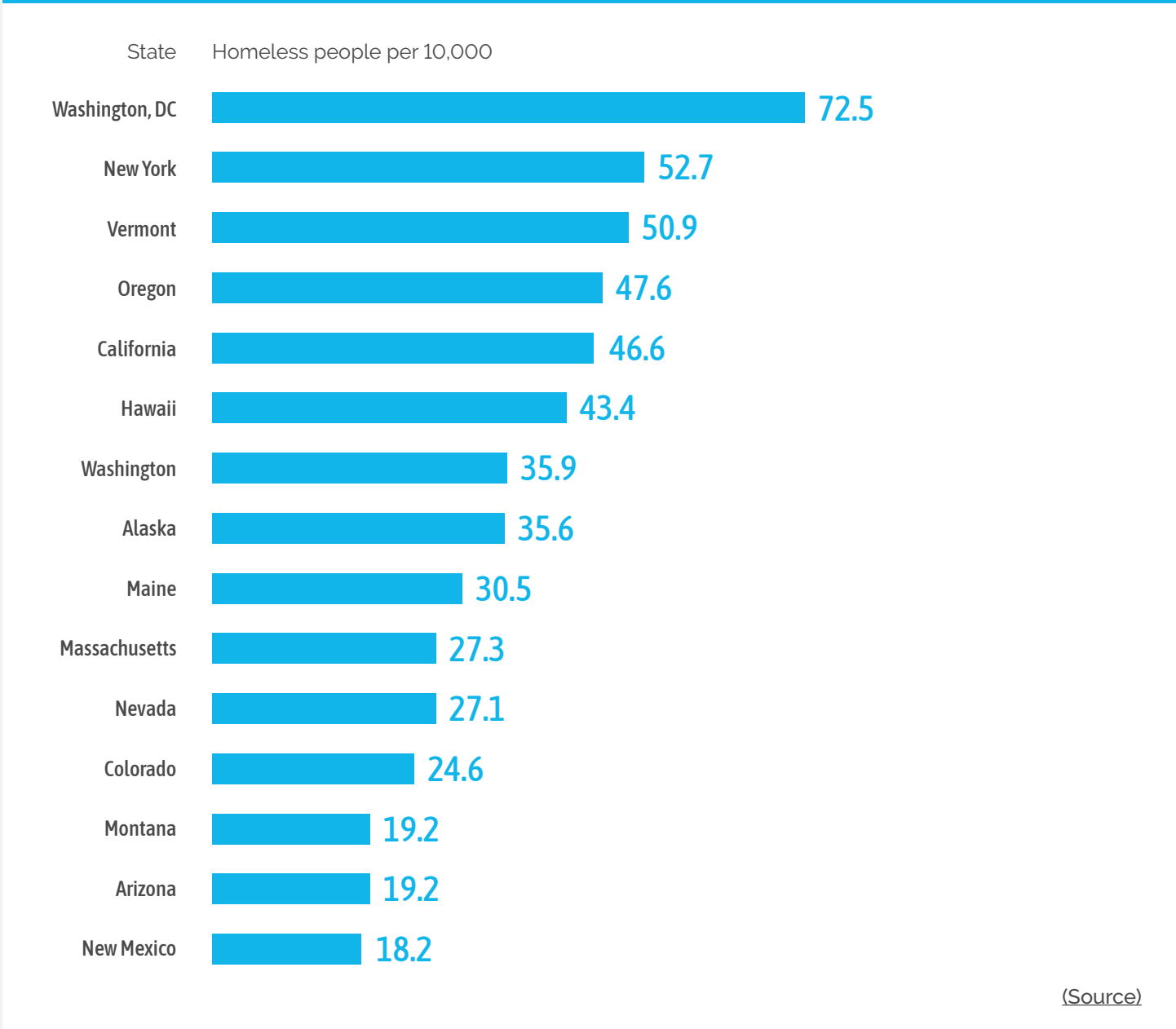
Statistics & data on homelessness

Housing

- Built for Zero data shows that access to affordable housing is a major barrier to ending homelessness. Traditional methods of creating affordable units take too long to close the housing gap. Solving homelessness **requires increased access to homes, particularly in markets with rapidly rising rents.**

- Over three-quarters (77%) of American households cannot afford a median-priced home in America, which is $495,750 in 2024. (Source)

- Nationally, there is a 7.3 million unit shortage in low-income rental housing, which affects all 50 states. This deficit is highest in **Arizona, California, and Nevada.** (Source)

No state has an adequate supply of affordable rental housing for the lowest-income renters

Affordable and available rental homes per 100 extremely low-income renter households
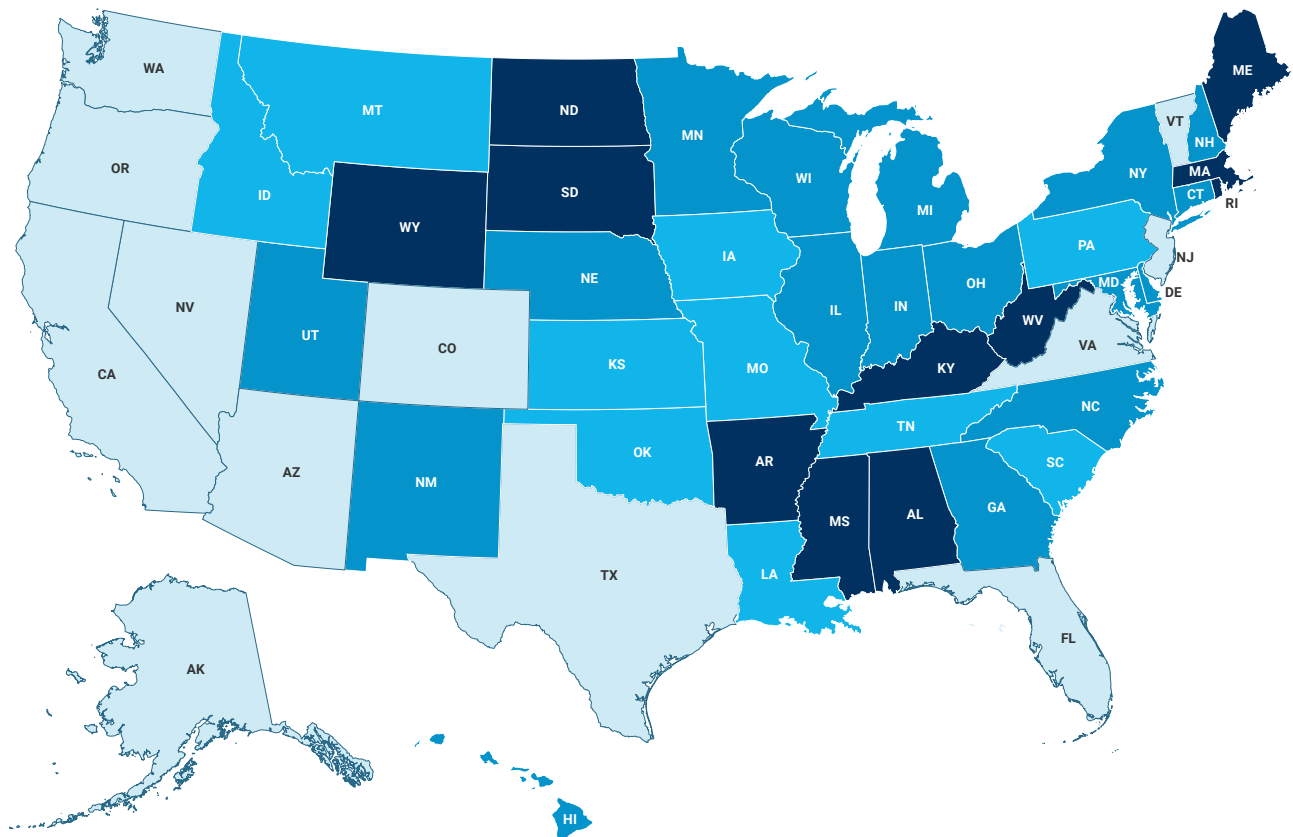
Legend:
- 30 or fewer
- 31 to 40
- 41 to 45
- more than 45

(Source)

Statistics & data on homelessness

Health

Housing is a crucial social determinant of health. By recognizing the interplay between housing and health, communities can work toward providing integrated, cost-effective support that improves outcomes for vulnerable populations. According to the National Health Care for Homelessness Council, people experiencing homelessness have higher rates of illness and experience mortality rates 3-4 times higher than the general population. (Source)

People experiencing homelessness:

- Are 3-4 times more likely to die prematurely
- Are 2 times as likely to have a heart attack or stroke
- Are 3 times more likely to die of heart disease if they are between 25 and 44 years old
- Experience an average life expectancy of 48 years (Source)

It is also important to note that experiencing illness or injury can lead to homelessness.

- An injury or illness can start as a health condition but can lead to loss of employment.
- Medical debt is the leading cause of personal bankruptcy filing in the U.S.
- More than 20% of Americans between 19 and 64 years old struggle to pay their medical bills.

Homelessness is a risk factor for precipitating or exacerbating mental illness symptoms and substance use. Rather than a one-way, cause-and-effect relationship, mental illness and homelessness are mutually reinforcing risk factors.

- The relationship between homelessness and mental illness and substance use disorders is complex, and many people experiencing homelessness have neither type of condition.

- The belief that individuals are losing housing due to these conditions also overlooks that mental health conditions and substance use disorders can frequently be outcomes of experiencing homelessness. The trauma of experiencing homelessness can expose individuals to stressors that increase their vulnerability to psychological conditions, distress, and substance use disorders. (Source).

Statistics & data on homelessness

Inequity

Homelessness cannot be ended without addressing racial inequity. Racism and homelessness are inextricably linked. People of color, particularly Black and Native Americans, are disproportionately impacted at virtually every phase of the experience. Community Solutions is guided by the understanding that homelessness cannot be ended without addressing racial inequity. (Source)

Share of subgroup living unsheltered, 2022

Subgroup	Percentage
American Indian, Alaska Native, Indigenous	55%
Asian or Asian American	53%
Black, African American, or African	29%
Hispanic/Latino	44%
Multi-Racial	46%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	55%
White	46%
Female	32%
Male	45%
Transgender	56%
Not Singularly Female or Male	66%
Gender Questioning	78%
Overall Population	40%
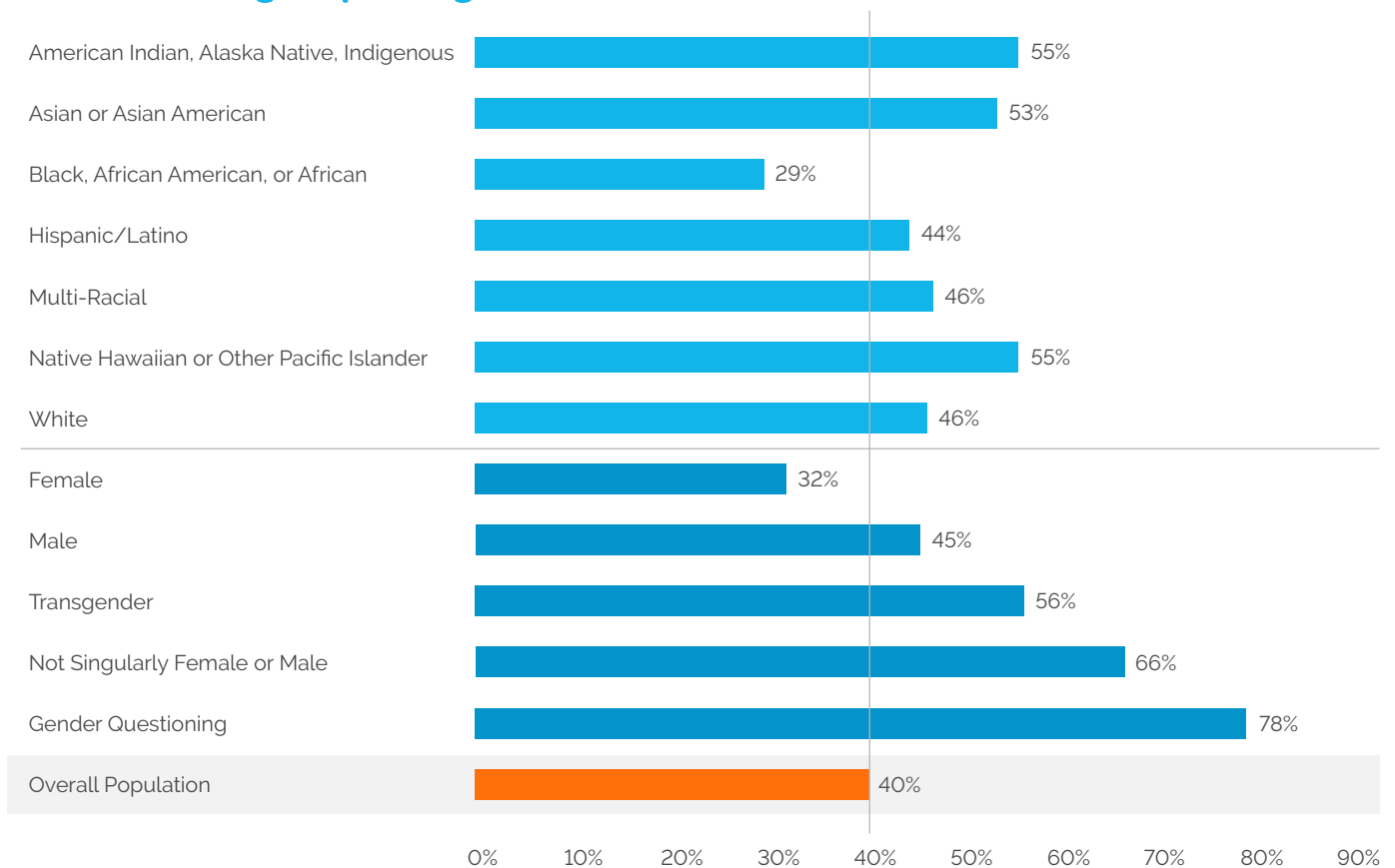
Legend: Race/Ethnicity · Gender · Overall

(Source)

Discussion questions

Introduction to the series

1. What are your initial reactions to the series? How did it make you feel?

2. Which of the featured storytellers did you connect with? Why?

3. After watching the series, what action are you most inspired to take (see actions on page 21-22)?

4. Which moments and stories in the episodes stood out to you most? Why?

5. What have you learned about the homelessness crisis and its root causes? Do you plan to share this with others in your life?

6. How did the series challenge your views on homelessness and your role in addressing it?

Exploring key themes

1. What misconceptions did you have about people experiencing homelessness before watching this series? How did it challenge or shift your perceptions?

2. What struck you about the ways these communities worked together?

3. How would you describe the solutions you learned about to others?

4. How do these stories resonate with your own life experiences or challenges?

5. Reflecting on your own life and perspectives, how do you understand your own story in relation to the stories of the people in these films?

6. Did you learn anything from the people on screen that you feel inspired to incorporate into your own life and community?

Community & personal reflection

1. How do you see your own role in contributing to or solving the issue of homelessness?

2. In what ways can you take action in your community to support those experiencing homelessness?

3. How can you use your voice and resources to advocate for systemic changes to address homelessness?

4. Reflecting on the film, how can you challenge your own assumptions and biases about homelessness?

Beyond our circles

Fremont County, Colorado

After a decade of experiencing chronic homelessness, Ralph transitions back into a life indoors, with support from his longtime caseworker, Nikki, and his community, which has been reshaping the homeless response system to successfully reach people like him.

Themes

Solving chronic homelessness in rural areas

Criminalization of homelessness

The power of community

Storytellers

- **Ralph Miller,** Resident
- **Nikki Reynolds,** Recovery Support Care Manager, Solvista Health
- **Jennifer Goshay,** Coordinated Entry System Program Manager, Loaves and Fishes Ministries
- **DeeDee Clement,** Executive Director, Loaves and Fishes Ministries

Quotes

"A lot of people don't like the homeless. Let 'em walk in my shoes for 10 years or more out here. See if they can do it, and if they can do it, I'll take my hat off to 'em." — Ralph Miller

"Everybody belongs, and there's room for all of us. And when we're intentional about that, and we're united across perspectives, across belief systems, across backgrounds, and treat everybody with the same kindness and respect, whether or not you relate to their identity or not, I think that's when we'll really be a healthier community. That's when we'll feel wellness." — Nikki Reynolds

"Connection with just our fellow human beings has slipped. And I think it's very intact for people experiencing homelessness; I think that sense of community is even more important and pronounced." — Nikki Reynolds

"It's easy for many people to just live their life and ignore the person that's holding a sign on the side of the street. But that really is not an option. It is possible to make a difference." — DeeDee Clement

Keep showing up

Hennepin County, Minnesota

Tnanita, a social worker, helps her unhoused neighbors move into housing and thrive. In a big city like Minneapolis, keeping hope alive in others as well as in herself is a beautiful struggle that takes solid partnerships and dedication to keep showing up.

Themes

Solving homelessness in big cities

The role of social workers

Resilience in the face of adversity

Storytellers

- **Tnanita Hatley,** Social Worker, Hennepin County Homeless to Housing
- **Randy Flowers,** System Navigator, Hennepin County Homeless to Housing
- **Denise Williams,** Tnanita's former client
- **David Hewitt,** Director of Housing Stability, Hennepin County
- **Danielle Werder,** Senior Department Administrator, Housing Stability, Hennepin County

Quotes

"I'm going to worry with you. I'm going to be here with you. And the biggest worry? Give it to me, give it to me."
— Tnanita Hatley

"I see your spirit. I see your joy. I see your pain. I see you struggling. I see you trying to make it. You're not just a number, you're human." *— Tnanita Hatley*

"If they can make it through another day, then I can." *— Tnanita Hatley*

"Unlike a lot of really pressing problems in our world, we actually know the solution to homelessness. It's housing." *— Danielle Werder*

Things are turning around

Denver, Colorado

Nathan, a U.S. Army veteran with a huge heart, reflects on the series of events that led him and his girlfriend onto the streets of Denver in single-digit temperatures. He was eventually connected to housing thanks to the coalition led by VA leaders like Mary and Lauren, who will do whatever it takes to get veterans into permanent housing.

Themes

Solving veteran homelessness in big cities

Designing a housing system that truly serves people

Storytellers

- **Nathan Hansley,** U.S. Army veteran
- **Mary Mish,** Program Manager, Community Resource & Referral Center, U.S. Dept of Veteran Affairs
- **Lauren Lapinski,** HUD-VASH Social Worker, U.S. Dept of Veteran Affairs
- **Haile Lewis,** HUD-VASH Social Worker, U.S. Dept of Veteran Affairs

Quotes

"I didn't want to be a bother to anybody. Maybe it was pride or whatever it was I just didn't ask anybody at the time for help." — Nathan Hansley

"I learned more from people in the streets and the four years of homelessness than I did in all my college for sure. Definitely a life-changing experience. There's a lot of really good people out there who all need help, they just don't know how to get it sometimes." — Nathan Hansley

"You have no place, you have no things, you have no protection. Getting a place is monumental. And once we get people into housing, that's where our work really begins." — Haile Lewis

Housing into homes

Jacksonville, Florida

Landlords hold a missing piece of the solution to homelessness: housing. Two landlords, Tahmica and Jodie, do their part by renting to veterans and formerly homeless tenants. Kayla, Tahmica's former tenant, dreams of following in her footsteps as a landlord.

Themes

The role of landlords

Solving veteran homelessness in big cities

The power of community

Storytellers

- **Tahmica McNair,** Property Owner
- **Jodie & Dayton Zeigler,** Property Owners
- **Kayla Shavers,** Tenant
- **Laura Lane,** Veteran System Coordinator, Changing Homelessness
- **Robert Conrad,** Director Of Client Services, Changing Homelessness

Quotes

"I have the ability to give people second chances." — *Tahmica McNair, Property Owner*

"When people work as a system together, there are changes. And it's so easy I think in this world of helping people to think oh, It doesn't really matter, it's always going to go on. Built For Zero is saying there are changes. You can see them and we're going to document them." — *Laura Lane*

"You did more than make it a home, you made us feel like we belong." — *Kayla Shavers to her landlord Tahmica.*

Let it grow

Gulf Coast, Mississippi

In Gulf Coast, Mississippi, the community is turning to young adults who have experienced homelessness to drive system change. Caitlyn and Samantha, two members of the regional homeless coalition advisory board, share their insights and lived expertise to help redefine how to solve youth homelessness.

Themes

> Solving youth homelessness

> The role of lived expertise

Storytellers

- **Caitlyn Sullivan,** Young Adult Advisory Board member
- **Samantha Hall,** Young Adult Advisory Board member
- **Antwon Wells,** Youth Programs Coordinator, Open Doors Homeless Coalition
- **Dena Wittmann,** Ph.D., Executive Director, Open Doors Homeless Coalition
- **Carissa Corbett,** Program Manager, Rapid Rehousing, Climb CDC

Quotes

"They imagine an old guy with a tent and a dog with a long beard and dirty. They didn't see a 23-year old, 19-year old girl living in her car because her parents kicked her out." — Samantha Hall

"So one thing they taught me was to listen to what they want and they are willing to work towards the things that they need and want, but not what you think is best for them." — Antwon Wells

"You cannot do this work in silos. You've got to do it in partnership or it's not going to work. You're gonna spin your wheels and then the apathy sets in and that is the recipe for stagnation." — Dena Whittmann

That's what I would change

Sacramento, California

Tanesha, Darrell, Julius, Yvette, and Onesimo are part of a group of formerly unhoused residents who lend their expertise to help fix the homeless response system from within. They advise on policy and investments, conduct street outreach, and embody the change many communities are striving to make.

Themes

Lived expertise

Misconceptions about homelessness

The power of community

Storytellers

- **Tanesha Travis,** Former PLE Coordinator, Sacramento Steps Forward, Founder of TSTJ Consulting
- **Darrell "D" Rogers,** Partner with Lived Experience
- **Julius "Juice" Douglas,** Founder & CEO, Ceaze The Moment, Partner with Lived Experience
- **Onesimo "O" Cendejas,** Partner with Lived Experience
- **Yvette Buckner,** PWLEC, RADT, HPS Trainer & NOC Coordinator, Partner with Lived Experience
- The rest of the cohort: **Dawn Basciano, Korei Gipson, Latesha Roster**
- **Gerald "Leo" Hickman,** Business owner, Broadway Coffee Company

Quotes

"When I come across people who have also been through those same situations, there is a level of empathy and connection that I have with those individuals that you cannot have if you've never been there." — Tanesha Travis

"We've been there, so we know that brutality that we've been through, we've been ostracized and demeaned. And to be able to sit around people who are getting healthier every day and really being part of the solution is awesome." — Yvette Buckner

"Not only do we get to share our experience with what we went through while experiencing homelessness, we get to share our hopes and our courage." — Darrell "D" Rogers

Take action

Now, more than ever, we need to work toward permanent solutions to make homelessness rare and brief. Here are some ways you can take action and inspire others to join the cause.

Watch and share the trailer of this film series.

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.

- **Ending homelessness is a matter of racial equity and justice:** Watch and share this video, created by the National Racial Equity Working Group.

- **Homelessness is solvable:** Explore this page, with examples of communities that are working to reduce and end homelessness. You can also watch this video, which provides an overview of the methodology communities across the country are adopting to solve homelessness.

Support local organizations

- Use this 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.

- If your community is not in Built for Zero, you can start by looking up the Continuum of Care that serves your area. This may be led by a municipal agency or by a nonprofit organization and will give you a sense of the actors leading your local homeless response system.

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 take action — making calls, organizing, or acting as a champion — to insist on accountability for that goal.

- Next, find out how your community is measuring progress toward that goal. Though almost every city has a strategic plan for ending homelessness, these plans often define success by the number of services delivered — not by reductions in homelessness. 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 why relying on a point-in-time count is insufficient for ending homelessness and why progress requires using real-time data.

- Success requires knowing whether the number of people experiencing homelessness is going down, month over month, and whether that progress is achieving equitable outcomes. Visit the National Alliance to End Homelessness to 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.

Take action

Below are some questions we encourage you to ask your elected officials:

- 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 our city/county have a shared aim of reaching functional zero homelessness for any population?

- Is our community currently achieving population-level reductions in homelessness, and how would we know?

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

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

Are you experiencing homelessness or at risk of it? Do you or someone you know need assistance?
Use our Homeless Resource Locator to easily find the names and contact information of homeless service providers near you.

For more actions you can take, explore these additional resources tailored for various groups:

- Business leaders
- Donors and corporate partners
- Leaders in data and technology
- Elected officials
- Faith-based organizations
- Health care professionals
- Homeless response leaders
- Journalists
- Public health workers
- Social impact investors