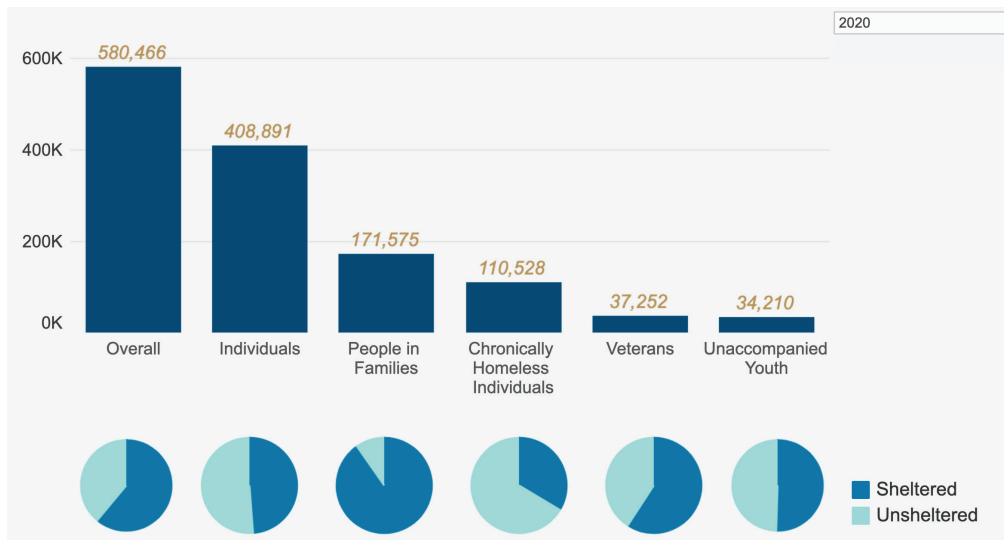


We can end homelessness.

The Problem

Nearly every community in the United States faces the challenge of homelessness. At any given time, more than 580,000 people across the country experience homelessness.



More than one third (38.9 percent) of the homeless population is unsheltered – sleeping in cars, abandoned buildings, outdoors, or in some other place not meant for human habitation.

The Impact

Homelessness takes a crippling toll on those who experience it. It can cause families to separate and has negative impacts on children’s physical and mental health, causing them to miss school and delaying their development.

Individuals who are homeless often become isolated from their communities. Their careers are disrupted, and finding or maintaining employment becomes nearly impossible. All too often, homelessness is associated with the onset of complex, costly health conditions.

Homelessness also affects the communities in which it occurs. Homeless people frequently engage with hospital emergency rooms, first responders, and the criminal justice system. Sometimes their cost to these public systems exceeds what it would cost to rehouse them.

The longer people are homeless, the worse these problems become.

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The Solutions

Homelessness is a serious and pervasive problem, but one that can be solved.

Despite increases in homelessness in recent years, the United States has a track-record of achieving sustained reductions in communities across the nation— even in the face of rising housing costs and diminishing incomes for the poor. In fact, an estimated 56,000 fewer people experienced homelessness a given night in 2020 than did in 2010.

Specifically, the progress on veteran homelessness demonstrates that ending all homelessness is possible. Due to increased federal investment in proven strategies, veteran homelessness is down by nearly half since 2009; 83 communities and three states have ended it.

What are the solutions?

The most effective strategy is to quickly get people back into housing, and then address their other needs, such as employment, health care, treatment, family intervention, or other services. Housing and services are both essential, but generally in that order. Housing makes people ready for services, not vice versa. Recent national media coverage has created great enthusiasm and validation for this approach, by highlighting the successful work in Houston, TX to reduce homelessness by 63 percent since 2011.

The solution may be simple, but implementing it is not. Ending homelessness requires a focus on evidence-based practices, data and outcomes, efficiency, and adaptiveness to change.

Federal Investment

In 2009, Congress enacted the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act. This act amended the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to enhance funding of proven, effective programs to end homelessness in states and local communities. McKinney-Vento and the HEARTH Act are the federal government's primary response to homelessness. Working alongside this legislation, relevant programs from HUD and other agencies provide a comprehensive federal response.

Looking Ahead

In the past decade, Republicans and Democrats alike have backed a comprehensive approach to ending homelessness. The consistent federal investment, evidence-based guidance from federal agencies, and continuous innovation by communities have produced significant results. But the problem is not yet solved.

The steep decline in veteran homelessness shows what can be accomplished by a highly targeted and significant increase in federal funding. Similar results could be achieved for youth, family, and indeed in all homeless subpopulations.

This approach works. To build on this progress, communities must continue to partner with the federal government, and Congress must invest the resources necessary to bring an end to homelessness.

As a first step, the Alliance requests support for \$3.6 billion in overall funding for HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants program.