

## NEW RESEARCH ANNOUNCEMENT

# Understanding Racial & Ethnic Disparities in Homelessness

Racial and ethnic barriers and discriminatory housing practices in the United States have persisted and have resulted in adverse outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC). Gaps in attaining financial and housing stability are some of the negative impacts of historically discriminatory practices. As a result, BIPOC individuals and families are overrepresented in homelessness across the country, with compounding barriers in receiving services to support their needs.

In 2020, the New Hampshire Coalition to End Homelessness published, “The State of Homelessness in New Hampshire Annual Report 2020”. NHCEH reported that Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) are dramatically overrepresented in experiences of homelessness in New Hampshire. Specifically, Multi-racial and Black/African Americans in New Hampshire were reported as being four times more likely to experience homelessness.

The Hispanic/Latino population were said to make up nearly 11 percent of the homeless population. In response to these reported disparities, the NHCEH concluded it was important to delve deeper into understanding the intersection of race and ethnicity with the homeless population in New Hampshire. This led to a partnership with researchers in the Department of Social Work at the University of New Hampshire (UNH). Approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of New Hampshire, the research team is exploring the lived experiences of BIPOC individuals who are or have experienced homelessness or housing instability in New Hampshire and their perceptions of homeless services in this predominantly White state. The study commenced in March 2022.

## **Research Study Details**

### **Study Highlights**

- The research team consists of two professors from the Social Work Department and two key partners with the NHCEH. There is additional project support from two undergraduate Social Work interns with NHCEH, and a graduate assistant with UNH.
- Agency partners serving the homeless population in New Hampshire were engaged to assist in identifying individuals interested in participating in the study to share their experiences.
- The four researchers are engaging up to 25 BIPOC individuals with homeless and housing instability experiences within the last two years.
- One-on-one interviews are being conducted via teleconference or in-person meetings with BIPOC individuals who have experience with homelessness and/or housing instability.
- As a gratuity for participation, BIPOC individuals are being provided with a Walmart gift card.

### **Study Evaluation**

The study's goal is to collect up to 25 interviews from BIPOC individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Following a strategic review of the transcribed interviews, the research team will identify trends reported by the research participants to learn about their perceptions of service provision and their thoughts on racial/ethnic barriers they consider present with homeless services in New Hampshire. The research team will then report findings to the NHCEH and provide recommendations on how to strengthen service provision and enhance experiences for this specialty population.

### **Next Steps**

Following completion of the interviews, NHCEH will share outcomes from the study with the homeless service system of care, including recommendations on how to better engage BIPOC clients in services. The study may also serve as a platform for future conversations among the NHCEH and BIPOC communities in New Hampshire on how to address racial disparities for BIPOC clients in need of stable housing. Finally, the NHCEH may utilize this study as an opportunity to engage in future research to assess the homeless service sector to understand how organizations and providers have responded to these learnings and consider how programs and policies may be, or have been, considered with a racial and ethnic equity lens.

# NH Coalition to End Homelessness