

NH Coalition to End Homelessness

Representative Joe Alexander, Chair
House Special Committee on Housing

February 14, 2024

Dear Chairman Alexander and Honorable Members of the House Special Committee on Housing:

On behalf of the NH Coalition to End Homelessness (NHCEH), I am writing to you today to provide information to inform your discussion related to HB1168, establishing a committee to study the impact of the housing crisis on people with disabilities. Each year, NHCEH releases a comprehensive report entitled *The State of Homelessness in New Hampshire*, which provides an analysis of the state's data, as well as information on related economic factors, demographic facts, and changes in trends in the state. The most recent report, released in December 2023, examined NH homelessness data for calendar year 2022.

From 2021-2022, NH saw an 86% rise in chronic homelessness, from 889 people to 1657; every NH resident included these numbers is a person with a disabling condition.

In order to qualify as chronically homeless per the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition, a person must experience at least one diagnosable disabling condition. In addition, they must be homeless for at least 12 months, either consecutively or spread over at least 4 separate occasions in the past 3 years. The intersection of being persons with disabilities and the extended length of their homelessness makes individuals experiencing chronic homelessness especially vulnerable to a host of complications that make securing and maintaining housing extremely difficult.

Nationally, the average increase in chronic homelessness between 2020-2022 was 15.6%. During the same time period, NH saw a 30.8% increase – nearly twice the national average. According to HMIS, one in four NH residents who experienced homelessness in NH in 2022 was chronically homeless, as chronic homelessness accounted for 27.5% of the overall homeless population in NH that year. **Again, every person who makes up these statistics is a person with a disability.**

The numbers presented above only take into account those who have experienced homelessness for over 12 months. In total in 2022, there were 6031 people who were homeless in NH (not counting those who were doubled up or couch surfing), with 1455 people unsheltered. Conservative estimates indicate that 25% of individuals experiencing homelessness have a disability. **That equals over 1500 people with disabilities without a home – over 360 of whom were unsheltered – in NH in 2022.**

I hope that this information is helpful in your discussion of HB1168. NHCEH's mission is to be a statewide partner in reversing these trends and making safe, stable housing accessible to everyone. If you have any questions or would like any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at jchisholm@nhceh.org.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Chisholm, LICSW, MLADC
Executive Director