Understanding Homelessness in New Hampshire

Fundamental to a stable and prosperous New Hampshire is the health and well-being of its residents. This means ensuring that pathways to opportunity are accessible in all regions of the Granite State.

Root Causes and Solutions

EXTREMELY TIGHT HOUSING MARKET

Issue: High rental costs and low vacancy rates make it extremely difficult for those with the lowest incomes to find housing, and place extreme strain on the existing emergency shelter system in New Hampshire.

Solutions: Make housing accessible to those with the lowest incomes by ensuring the availability of rental assistance. Provide supportive services to those who need help to maintain housing. Commit to sustained, long term investment in affordable housing development.

INSUFFICIENT RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Issue: As of now, eligible low-income, elderly and disabled persons must wait years to receive financial assistance to close the growing gap between their incomes and the cost of rent; and in many cases, landlords will not accept this rental assistance once it is received.

Solutions: Advocate for additional investment in rental assistance programs. Ensure healthy integration of housing across all communities by building incentives for landlords to accept Section 8 Vouchers. Increase the number of available units accepting rental assistance by prohibiting sources of income discrimination.

WIDESPREAD EVICTIONS

Issue: The incomes of low-wage workers have failed to keep up with increasing rents. As a result, eviction has become too commonplace across the state. Eviction not only increases homelessness, but also leads to additional obstacles, including health and academic challenges, particularly in children.

Solutions: Develop a comprehensive eviction prevention system that can provide assistance to vulnerable families at the first sign of a housing challenge. This may include enhanced resources for landlord/tenant mediation, and education for landlords and tenants on what they can do to improve housing outcomes.

INADEQUATE SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE

Issue: Many communities, particularly rural areas, lack the infrastructure to support individuals most at risk for homelessness, including healthcare facilities, and a robust transportation network. Without a comprehensive system to manage crisis response, people will continue to fall into homelessness, with an economic and social cost far greater than the cost of preventing it.

Solutions: Invest in a coordinated service system that includes a dedicated case management funding stream for those facing a housing crisis. For those whose long-term housing success depends on continual supports, create a plan for additional permanent supportive housing in communities with the greatest need.

It's possible to
END HOMELESSNESS

Here's what you can do as a...
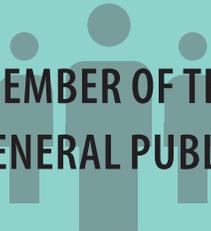
MEMBER OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- Get involved in local initiatives working on solutions in housing, substance use/mental health treatment, and transportation
- Advocate for affordable housing in your community
- Contact your elected officials to let them know that ending homelessness is important to you and your community

LANDLORD

- Learn more about the benefits of, and consider accepting, Housing Choice vouchers
- Consider setting aside units earmarked for affordability
- Advocate for incentives to accepting Housing Choice vouchers
- Learn more about area resources to assist in resolving tenant conflicts before eviction becomes unavoidable

POLICY MAKER

- Become educated on the driving factors of homelessness in the state
- Learn more about best practices in other communities for increasing affordable housing and ending homelessness
- Invite input from organizations working with those experiencing homelessness as policies are being developed and considered
- Craft housing policies that improve quality of life for all New Hampshire residents, housed and homeless

DONOR

- Donate your time and treasure to organizations serving people experiencing homelessness in your community, and those working on solutions
- Learn more about the issues affecting homelessness, including substance use disorder/mental health, and transportation, and advocate for solutions

NH Coalition
to End Homelessness