

Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Homelessness Response

We created the [Framework for an Equitable COVID-19 Homelessness Response](#) to help policymakers address the public health implications of COVID-19, help contain the spread of the virus, and help communities quickly get back on track economically. The Framework provides a guide to help communities to maximize their resources and use them wisely. The Framework encourages organizations to work together to develop better solutions to homelessness.

[Click here to access the Framework](#)

Use new funds strategically and wisely.

The needs are great but smart planning and execution will help more families and individuals while also helping communities emerge from the pandemic even stronger. Communities that use the Framework will be more effective and cost-efficient. Key principles include:

1. Advance racial justice and equity

Both homelessness and the pandemic shine a light on racial and economic inequities in our nation so new funds should help eliminate disparities in communities – not exacerbate them.

2. Address the highest needs first

People who are unsheltered, older, disabled, medically fragile, literally homeless and extremely low income should be helped first. Start by addressing needs of people who are currently experiencing homelessness.

3. Grow partnerships

By reinvigorating partnerships with a broad range of organizations and mainstream systems there will be more resources and you can reach deeper into impacted communities.

4. Get people into housing

The best health intervention is stable housing. Stable housing is necessary for economic recovery.

5. Act quickly

Business as usual will not work. We must act quickly in the context of the pandemic and the growing economic crisis.



Why should your community use the framework and equity-based decision-making?

To make communities healthier and reduce the spread of the coronavirus, we need to prioritize helping homeless people get to safer settings.

Helping people who are unsheltered move to healthier settings will make our streets and public spaces healthier for everyone. Healthier settings include apartments, non-congregate settings, or appropriately decompressed emergency shelters.

The Framework will help you be more successful in making the wisest decision with limited resources within a time-constrained environment.



Overcrowded and improperly configured congregate emergency shelters can contribute to community spread so reducing overcrowding and expanding spaces is critical to making communities healthier.

Quick placement in housing will make shelters and streets healthier for everyone. Partnering with businesses, healthcare, and other community organizations will make these efforts more successful.

Many more people are losing their jobs due to COVID-19 than can be helped with the amount of assistance available. By committing to helping the people most at risk of homelessness, scarce resources will achieve better results. Targeted homelessness prevention and diversion are proven tools to do this.

By strengthening your public-private response to homelessness, your community will be safer and healthier for everyone.

3 Tips

to prevent increasing rates of homelessness during the COVID-19 crisis

1. Use ESG to address needs of currently homeless people – use for rapid rehousing, emergency shelter, and diversion.
2. Design rental assistance programs to serve households most at risk of homelessness – target households with prior experience of homelessness, extremely low incomes (earning less than 30% of area median income, and living in neighborhood with high poverty rates).
3. Leverage mainstream services and other new funding streams to increase impact.