

National Homelessness and Housing Organizations Respond to USICH Report

October 19, 2020, Washington, D.C. – Twelve national organizations, representing advocates and leaders in national efforts to end homelessness, released the following statement:

Today, the Trump administration’s United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) released a document that purports to lay out a plan to address homelessness.

This is a plan in name only. It does not contain the interventions proven to reduce and end homelessness, which have been embraced by administrations on both sides of the aisle. The vast majority of what has been proposed cannot be implemented by the agency. The document continues to leverage data that has been widely disproven by experts.

The White House – by putting forth such an ineffective and dishonest document – fails to take seriously the grave dangers facing our neighbors and country today. Homelessness has always been a matter of life and death for those experiencing it. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, homelessness has become a deadlier threat to the most vulnerable people in our communities, and an imminent risk to millions of Americans. Studies estimate that millions [may soon face eviction](#) or [become homeless](#).

This report only adds to a history of actions by the administration that fail to reduce or end homelessness across our country, and instead advances harm that disproportionately impacts Black, Indigenous, and other people of color. Examples include:

- **Despite mentioning racial equity in the report, [releasing an Executive Order banning federal contractors from hosting trainings on racial equity](#)**
- **Lack of leadership on another comprehensive stimulus bill,** as millions of Americans remain out of work and find themselves at risk of eviction
- **[Allowing shelters to discriminate against transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people](#)** experiencing homelessness by removing critical gender identity protections from HUD’s Equal Access rule
- **[Removing protections against housing discrimination and segregation](#),** by dismantling the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule
- **Eliminating federal programs that provide affordable homes to the people at the greatest risk,** by slashing funding for HUD programs by up to 18% in the 2018, 2019, and 2020 budget requests
- **[Forcing mixed-status immigrant families to separate or face eviction](#)** through a proposed rule related to the Housing and Community Development Act of 1980
- **Attempted to divert significant VA funding away** from permanent supportive housing for the most vulnerable veterans experiencing homelessness

- [Addressing people experiencing homelessness as a “disgrace” that hurts the “prestige” of cities and threatening to raze encampments](#)

We know the nation can do better on homelessness because the nation has done better on homelessness. In the past 15 years, the nation has achieved periods of sustained and dramatic progress. During this time, federal leaders aligned around data and evidence on what worked, and targeted policies and investments to support the needs of communities.

Lives of our neighbors and the values of our country are at stake. Homelessness reflects the racism, discrimination, and inequity that hurts our neighbors and our nation — and our unrealized potential to build a stronger country. If the nation is ready to recognize and reconcile its ongoing crisis of racial inequity, then the nation must also become ready to end homelessness.

We can build a future where everyone in our country has a fair and equal opportunity, which begins with a place to call home. Communities have proven what is possible, and we all have a responsibility to support this reality. This path forward requires serious federal leadership that believes in that future and can develop a meaningful plan to support it.

Organizations

- A Way Home America
- Community Solutions
- Funders Together to End Homelessness
- Heartland Alliance
- National Alliance to End Homelessness
- National Coalition for Homeless Veterans
- National Health Care for the Homeless Council
- National Homelessness Law Center
- National Innovation Service
- National Low Income Housing Coalition
- True Colors United
- Youth Collaboratory