

TARGETED HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION IN AN EFFECTIVE HOMELESS RESPONSE SYSTEM

Targeted homelessness prevention helps to keep at-risk households from experiencing homelessness through a strategic allocation of resources.

An effective, efficient, and equitable homeless response system requires the alignment of all interventions. Targeted homelessness prevention contributes to this shared goal of alignment: ensuring households do not enter the system (whenever possible), and/or helping them exit the system into permanent housing (should they become homeless).

The effectiveness of this approach relies on several key pillars:

Data Analysis

A key to effectively targeting prevention resources and tailoring strategies involves data analysis. Communities should conduct comprehensive homeless system data analyses, inclusive of quantitative and qualitative data, to understand common characteristics among people at greatest risk of homelessness.

Centering Equity from Start to Finish

Communities must recognize and addressing disparities in funding distribution and service provision to ensure they are fostering an inclusive, equitable, and just targeted homelessness prevention system. Systems should make the following considerations when formulating the resource allocation, service offerings, and policy development for targeted homelessness prevention.

Integrating Housing Problem-Solving: Housing problem-solving is a person-centered, housing-focused approach to quickly resolve housing crises by exploring creative, safe, and cost-effective alternatives to homelessness. This philosophy and approach should be integrated into any targeted homelessness prevention strategy.

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Intentional Prioritization: Strategic allocation of resources involves prioritizing assistance for individuals most susceptible to homelessness (e.g., history of child welfare involvement, transitioning out of foster care, returning citizen, history of homelessness, lived experience of discrimination, etc.). Identifying and targeting people at greatest risk will ensure that resources are directed where they are most urgently needed. This type of targeting helps to move away from practices that have historically marginalized some populations.

Access to Resources and Services: Accessibility is the foundation of an effective system. Ensuring that services are easily accessible to those who need them most enhances the likelihood of timely intervention and support to reach intended households. Considerations could be how households access resources, where they're located, times of operation, diversity in languages offered, etc.

Nontraditional Partnerships: Communities can form more intentional partnerships with organizations adjacent to or outside of the homeless response system (e.g., culturally responsive organizations) to increase access to targeted homelessness prevention resources and services.

Leveraging Resources

Communities should coordinate all available resources when implementing targeted prevention strategies. Collaboration with other preventive initiatives (like eviction prevention programs) facilitates seamless transitions, continuity of support, and streamlining of resources to households at greater risk for experiencing homelessness. By leveraging various resources, the system can maximize its impact, address the diverse needs of at-risk individuals, and stem the inflow.

Targeted homelessness prevention protects households from the trauma of homelessness and reduces the inflow into the homeless response system. A holistic, data-informed, and community-engaged approach is instrumental in fostering a more resilient and effective targeted homeless prevention system.

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PREVENTION: STEMMING THE INFLOW”

PART OF THE WEBINAR SERIES “**STRONGER TOGETHER:
A ROADMAP TO AN EFFECTIVE HOMELESS SYSTEM**”