



National Alliance to
END HOMELESSNESS

Key Takeaways from National Opinion Polling

May 2025

OVERVIEW

In April of 2025, the National Alliance to End Homelessness commissioned Morning Consult to field a survey to measure Americans' opinions and attitudes about homelessness. This endeavor was a follow up to polling published by the Alliance with Morning Consult in June of 2024, which indicated broad understanding among respondents that the nation's affordable housing crisis is a major driver of homelessness.

The Alliance's follow-up poll further probes this connection. Specifically, as Americans deal with increasing economic stress from a broad array of factors – including runaway housing costs, stubborn inflation, an uneven stock market, widespread concerns over the cost of goods, and proposals to gut essential federal programs – the Alliance wanted to know how respondents connected the state of the economy to their feelings on housing, homelessness, and overall community stability.



KEY FINDINGS

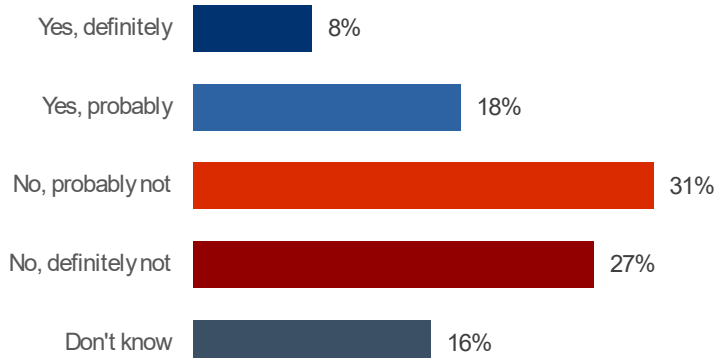
RESPONDENTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT HOUSING AND THE ECONOMY

More than three-quarters of respondents (78%) understand that their local housing market is tied to the economy. Moreover, 69% of respondents reported that they are concerned about their ability to maintain stable housing (whether they own, rent, or stay in it as part of a household). They are even more worried for their neighbors, with 79% expressing concern about the ability of others in their communities to maintain their housing.

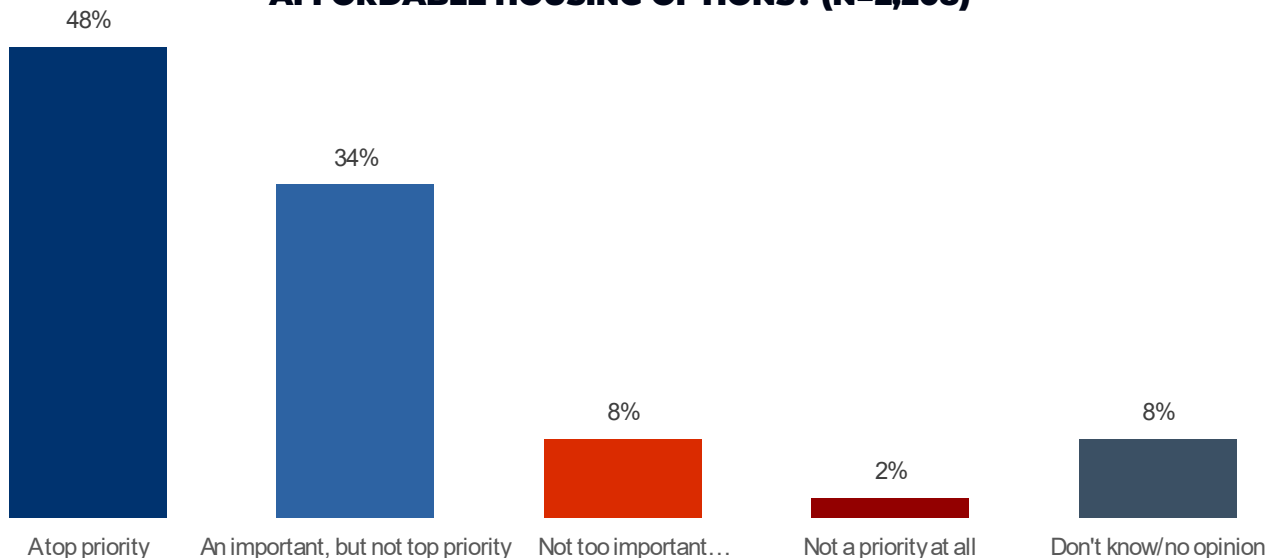
Responses further indicated frustration about inaction to address housing affordability: **82% of respondents believe that it should be a priority for leaders to ensure there are affordable housing options in their community, but 58% responded that there has not been enough investment towards this goal.**

These findings indicate a ripe opportunity for advocates to tap into the simmering frustration over housing costs. Yet, economic narratives continue to revolve around costs of groceries, transportation, and household goods. It is essential that advocates reframe these economic pain points so that the largest expense is centered in these discussions: the cost of housing.

QUESTION: BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW, DO YOU THINK YOUR COMMUNITY HAS INVESTED ENOUGH IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING? (N=2,208)

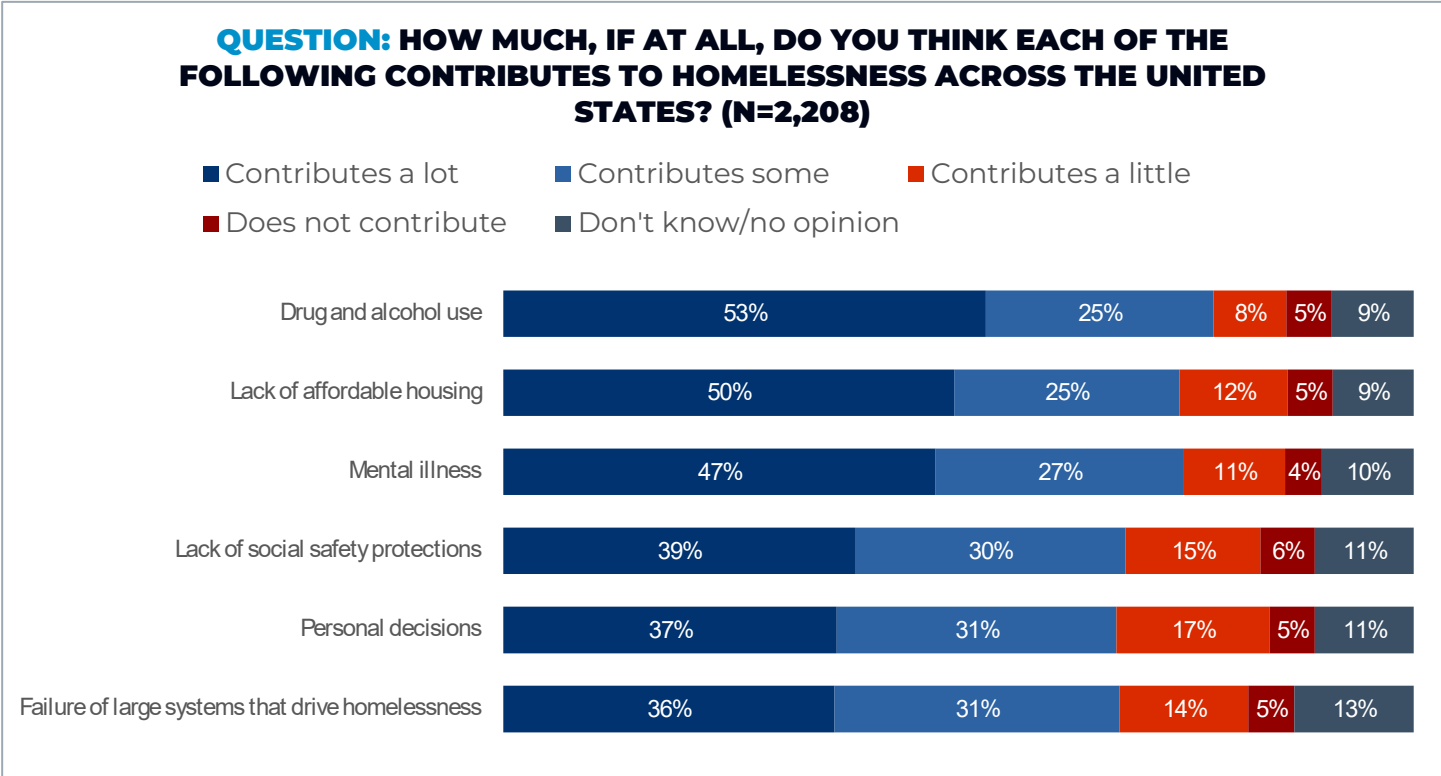


QUESTION: HOW MUCH OF A PRIORITY, IF AT ALL, SHOULD IT BE FOR LEADERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY TO MAKE SURE THERE ARE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS? (N=2,208)

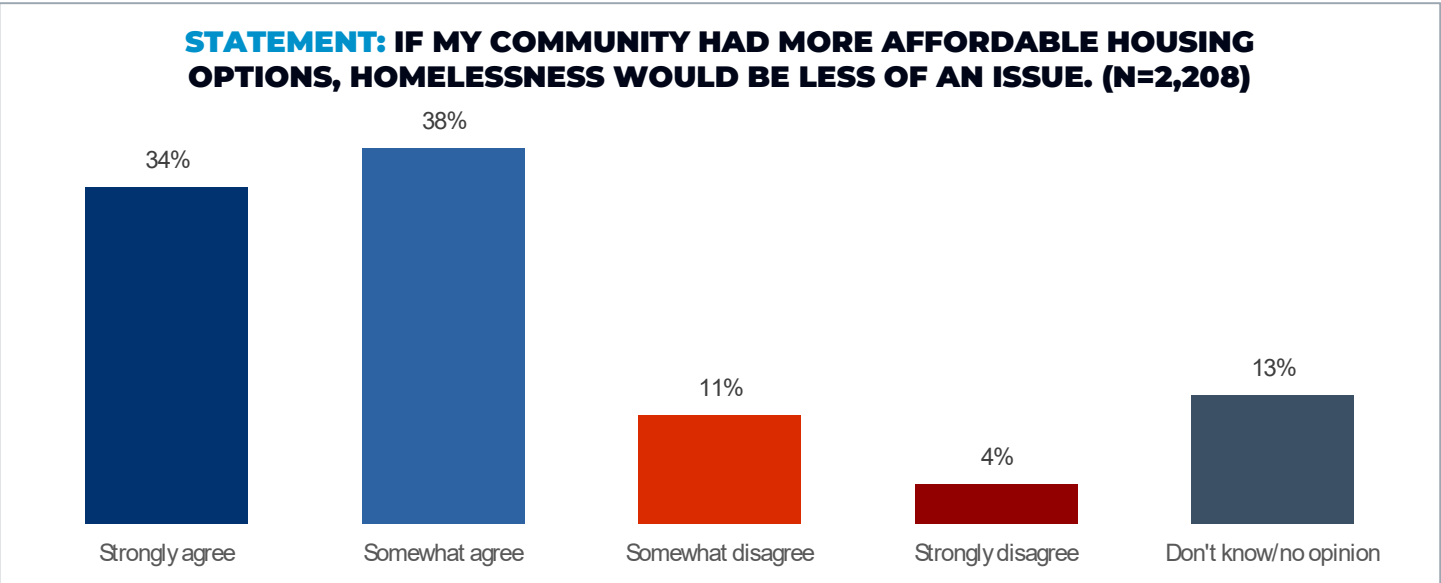


PEOPLE CONTINUE TO SEE A CLEAR CONNECTION BETWEEN HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND HOMELESSNESS

When asked what was contributing to homelessness in the United States, results show tight clustering between addiction (78%), affordable housing (75%), and mental illness (74%). These findings are generally consistent with the Alliance/Morning Consult polling in 2024. Cumulatively, they point to a deepening appreciation of how economic factors drive homelessness, as opposed to outdated narratives that blamed homelessness entirely on addiction, mental illness, and personal decisions.



Additionally, 72% of respondents agreed with the statement: “If my community had more affordable housing options, homelessness would be less of an issue.”



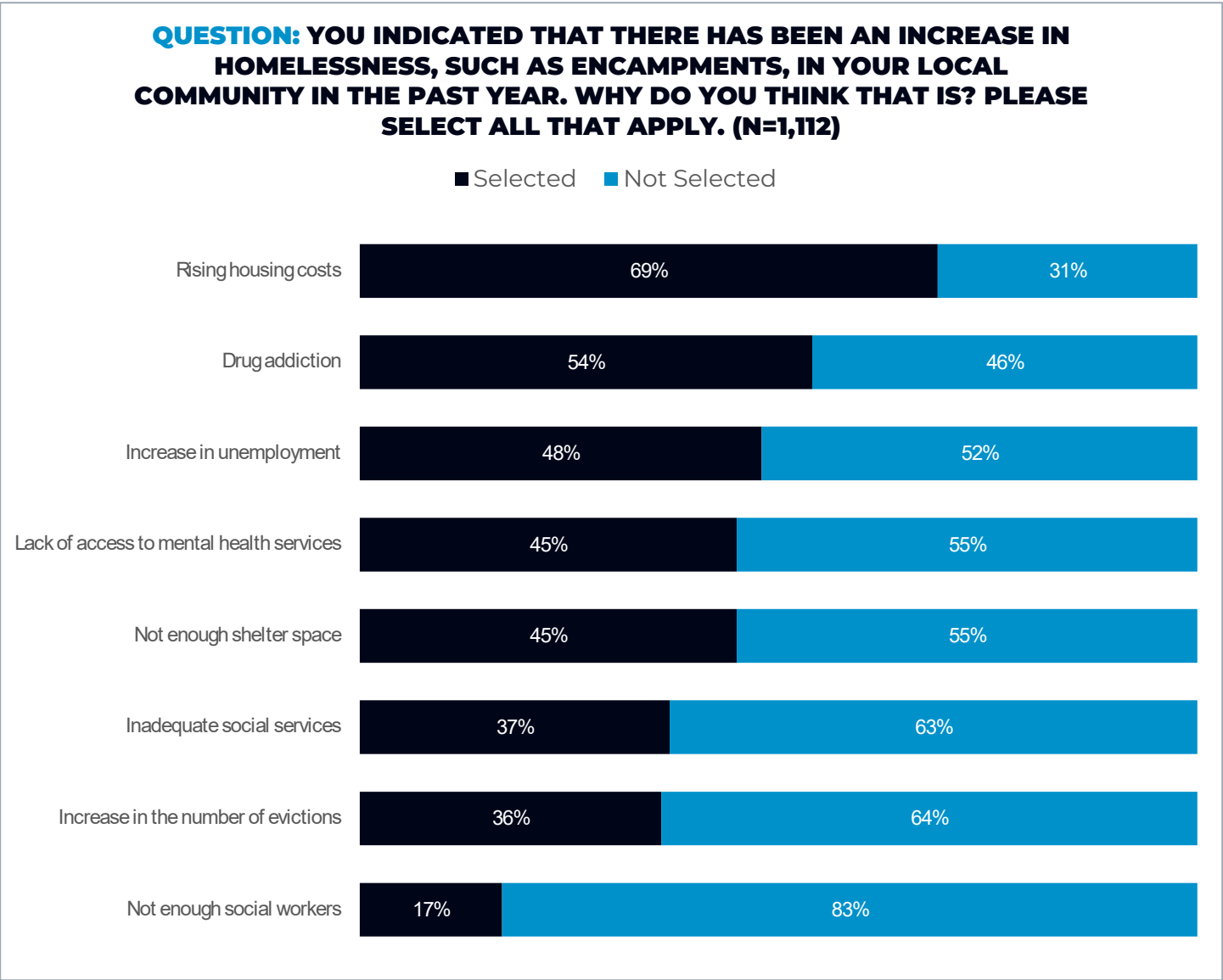
PEOPLE ATTRIBUTE BOTH ECONOMIC AND PERSONAL FACTORS TO THE RISE IN ENCAMPMENTS

Half of respondents reported that they'd seen an increase in encampments in their communities. However, when asked what they thought was driving the increase, respondents offered nuanced and varied opinions.

While more than half of respondents (54%) cited addiction as a driver of encampments, **an even higher number (69%) believed that housing costs were a primary driving factor, and 48% cited a rise in unemployment.**

Lower-polling responses pointed to scarcity of core resources, including the lack of shelter (45%), mental health services (45%), and social services (37%).

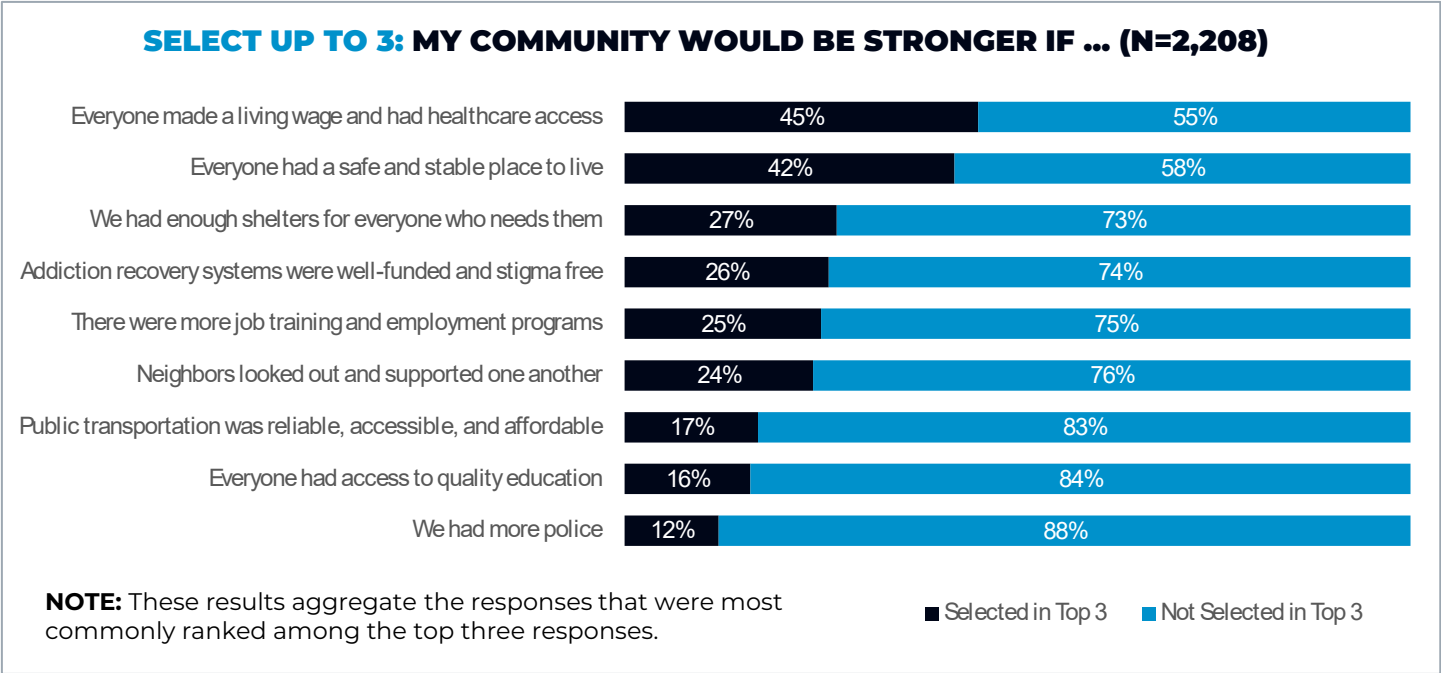
Concerningly, only 17% referenced the lack of social workers to serve people in encampments. This indicates a broad lack of awareness of the workforce challenges that daunt the homeless services sector and stall efforts to rehouse people in communities across the country. It is important that those working in the homelessness sector are consistently educating their lawmakers and local media about the staffing crisis affecting homeless services.



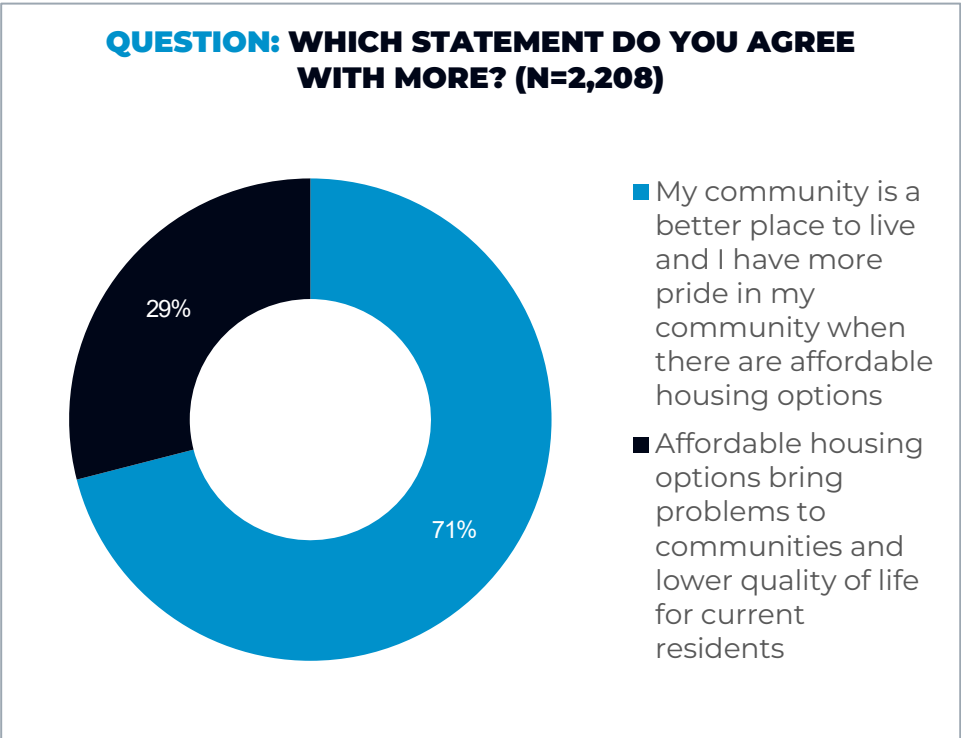
RESPONDENTS ARE SEEKING SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR COMMUNITIES

Respondents were asked to choose up to three factors that would make their communities stronger. Although the list revealed a broad array of responses, two in particular were most prominent: **45% cited the need for a living wage and healthcare access for everyone, while 42% called for everyone to have a safe and stable place to live.**

Smaller numbers of respondents pointed to the need for more shelters (27%), better funding and less stigma around addiction recovery services (26%), and more job training programs (25%). Of note, the lowest-polling response was for more police, which only garnered 12% of the total response.



As cities and states increasingly advance carceral approaches to homelessness, it is essential that elected officials recognize that their constituents don't want strong-arm tactics in their communities; rather, they want investments that promote health, stability, and opportunity. In fact, 71% of respondents agree that their community is a better place to live and that they have more pride in their community when there are affordable housing options.



CONCLUSION

We all want to live in communities that are safe, strong, and thriving. Yet, experiences of economic stress and scarcity affect a rapidly growing number of Americans.

These experiences have the potential to build greater awareness and support for homelessness solutions. And no solution would impact more people than the expansion of affordable housing resources. Unfortunately, in a moment of aggressive federal government austerity, communities may resist making the needed investments to address the housing crisis.

The opportunity at hand is for advocates, homeless system leaders, and providers to continue to thread the needle for their community members and elected leaders. **It is essential for the public to understand that the pressures facing them today — such as grocery prices, housing costs, threatened benefits, low wages, and unstable market shifts — are not disconnected from one another, but part of a greater collective scarcity that ultimately results in homelessness for far too many Americans.**

For decades, it has been easy for the public to assume that the factors that drove people into homelessness were distinct from their own experiences and pressures. The results of this polling strongly indicate that many Americans are starting to understand that this is no longer true.

Sadly, investments in homelessness and housing solutions are consistently met with opposition by both lawmakers and community members. To overcome this frustrating challenge, it is absolutely essential that our advocacy points to the collective needs and economic pressures faced by the community, and the benefits that all will share if our leaders make the needed investments.

METHODOLOGY

Polling was conducted by Morning Consult between April 24–25, 2025 among a sample of 2,208 adults, with an estimated 10–15 minute timeframe for completion (not including demographic questions). Data were weighted to approximate a target sample of adults based on age, gender, race, educational attainment, region, gender by age, and race by educational attainment. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points.

