## Topline Talking Points

- HUD programs help create and maintain strong and healthy communities. They help low-income households with rental assistance, and they connect people experiencing homelessness with the housing and services they need for long-term stability.

- The inability to afford housing is the key driver of homelessness. Currently, [less than 1 in 4 people](#) who are eligible are assisted by HUD's federal rental assistance programs.

- Communities cannot afford to lose the already-scarce resources for housing and homelessness. Rents are rising. Eviction rates are too high. And the number of people experiencing homelessness has reached unprecedented highs. Now is not the time for the federal government to abdicate its responsibility to prevent and end homelessness in the United States.

- Everybody needs a safe, affordable, and accessible place to call home. People should not be forced to choose between paying rent or buying groceries or medicine. However, because of the final FY2026 reconciliation package, millions of Americans will lose access to health insurance and food assistance. This will only make the need for federal housing and homelessness assistance more dire.

- It is clear that homelessness does not impact all populations the same way. In fact, the disparities in those who experience homelessness are driven by structural drivers attributed to historical and current discriminatory policies, programs, and practices at all levels of government.

  - As a result of systems that don't work fairly for all people, many people — especially Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, Alaska Native, Black, and Latino people, LGBTQ+ people, and people with disabilities — don't have a fair shot at economic opportunity, housing security, healthcare, and more, all of which contribute to increased risk of homelessness.

  - Older adults are among the fastest growing populations of people entering homelessness for the first time

  - People with disabilities tend to experience long-term or recurring homelessness.

  - Young people aged 18–24 who identify as gay or transgender are at double the risk of experiencing homelessness than straight young adults

  - People living in rural communities while homeless are often undercounted, invisible, and under resourced across vast geographies

- Solving homelessness will require us to address the specific needs of specific groups to account for those who have been excluded, systems that don't work for everyone, and outcomes that are unfair along geography, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, race, and other demographics. Data from across the country shows the disparities are consistent with the population profiles.

- **NATIONALLY:**

  - Homelessness increased by a record 18% between 2023 and 2024, driven largely by an unprecedented number of households experiencing homelessness for the first time.

    - Unsheltered homelessness rose by 6.9% overall.

    - The biggest increases were in largely suburban (19.1%) and largely rural (17.8%) areas.

  - It's not just that more people are experiencing homelessness. More people are becoming homeless for the first time. A dire affordable housing crisis and an insufficient social safety net drive nearly 19,000 people into homelessness for the first time each week.

  - No state has an adequate supply of affordable and available homes for extremely low-income renters.

    - The shortage of affordable and available rental homes for extremely low-income households ranges from a 7,300 rental home shortage in Wyoming to nearly 1 million rental home shortage in California.

  - In 2022, homelessness response systems only had the capacity to connect 16% of households served in shelter to permanent housing.

# Tailored Messaging Prompts

- In your district and state:

  - Share data about the people experiencing homelessness:

    - Total number of people experiencing homelessness

      - Older Adults
      - Veterans
      - People with disabilities
      - Families with Children

    - Number of people becoming homeless and touching your system for the first time

  - Share data about the system capacity within your homelessness response system

    - Number of emergency shelter beds and their capacity/utilization

    - Number of permanent housing beds/units and extent in which there is availability to house a new household (rate of turnover)

  - Demonstrate affordable housing shortages in your state.

  - Show how many people in your state and district are at risk of losing access to critical protections like Medicaid and SNAP.

- To demonstrate how inequities play out in your state or community, the Alliance provides the following data dashboards for each state, and the solutions needed to disrupt them. With this information, you can:

  - Illustrate the disparate rates of homelessness by race to make the case for culturally specific strategies to disrupt pipelines into homelessness and to equitably re-house people faster.

  - Identify rates of unsheltered homelessness by race to demonstrate disparate vulnerabilities of people living on the street.

  - Identify rates of homelessness by gender to ensure resources meet people's stated gender preferences.

    - Gender-expansive people face unique barriers when seeking housing or accessing emergency shelter and services without discrimination or fear. These factors can lead to increased housing insecurity. Read more about these unique vulnerabilities and how providers and policymakers can help, particularly through preserving the Equal Access Rule.

  - Document the stark rise in older adults and the resources and strategies needed to ensure people can access age-appropriate resources.