DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

DID YOU KNOW...

Long-term permanent housing assistance leads to significant reductions in family homelessness.

CONTENTS

DEPARTMENT OF **WORKFORCE SERVICES**

INTRODUCTION

WHETHER VISIBLE OR NOT, homelessness is a part of every Utah community. Although the center for homeless services has long been in Salt Lake City, every city and town in the state has individuals and families who find themselves in hard times and without a home, triggered by job loss, divorce, domestic violence, medical expenses, substance abuse, mental health issues or something else entirely.

While some people experiencing homelessness may be able to utilize an emergency shelter or find some other short-term solution, some choose to remain "unsheltered," which includes camping, living in a car or literally sleeping on the street.

The reasons for these choices are varied. Some people don't feel safe in a shelter or don't feel they are able to follow the rules. Some aren't comfortable interacting with service providers. Couples don't want to be split up into different shelters and people

420 homeless people in Utah were found to be unsheltered on a single night in January 2018.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

IT IS IMPORTANT for communities to establish goals and develop a strategic plan to engage and connect unsheltered individuals to resources and housing. Strategies and outcomes should be:

☐ Data driven

☐ Based on evidence-based interventions

☐ Coordinated with established state and federal priorities

☐ Aligned with system outcomes

☐ Reported to community and stakeholders

don't want to be separated from their pets. PTSD or other mental health conditions could make staying in a shelter impossible.

With this in mind, every community should develop its own personalized response to unsheltered homelessness for its residents. On a single night in January 2018, 420 homeless people in Utah were found to be unsheltered; less than half of those were in Salt Lake County. Creating an individualized plan based on the needs and resources in your specific community will help you support and protect your residents, both those with homes and without.

DATA

Utah has two primary sources of statewide homelessness data that can help local communities develop appropriate response strategies. The Homeless Information Management System (HMIS) records and stores longitudinal, client-level information on the characteristics and service needs of homeless individuals. HMIS contains client assessment data on housing barriers, income and other factors that may contribute to their homelessness. The data in HMIS is primarily self-reported.

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a physical count of all homeless persons living in emergency shelters, transitional housing and on the streets on a single night. This count is conducted annually in Utah during the last 10 days in January and provides a snapshot of homelessness on a single night. The data is collected by volunteers, and the quality of the data reflects the number of volunteers and quality of training they receive. If you believe your community would benefit from better data, plan to mobilize your community to participate in the Point-in-Time count.

Serving Utah's unsheltered homeless residents is not easy and there are no quick fixes. Solutions require community investment and allocation of resources to create a system that matches the needs of those experiencing homelessness. Even with that in place, it may take many interactions and the right timing for someone to be comfortable to engage in services.

LEARN MORE

- HMIS Data Dashboard: jobs.utah.gov/housing/homelessness/homelessdata.html

- 2018 State and County Point-in-Time data: jobs.utah.gov/housing/scso/documents/homelessness2018.pdf

- Utah's Approach to Homelessness: jobs.utah.gov/housing/scso/documents/approachhomelessness.pdf

This document provides a set of recommendations and ideas to assist communities in creating their own response plan for local unsheltered homelessness.

UTAH'S HOMELESS SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

Services for homeless individuals in Salt Lake County are in transition, with three new resource centers coming online July 2019 as Operation Rio Grande is ending. Below is a side by side comparison of the old model compared to the new model, in relation to emergency shelter in Salt Lake County.

CURRENT MODEL

Diversion for families

→ **Housing**

Emergency Shelters
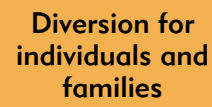
for men and women   for families   for youth
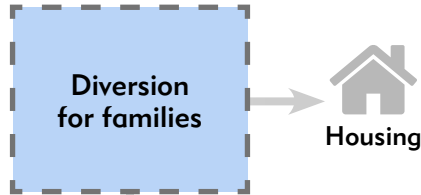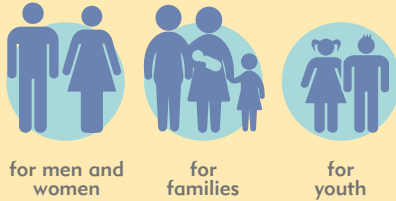
Services/Interventions:
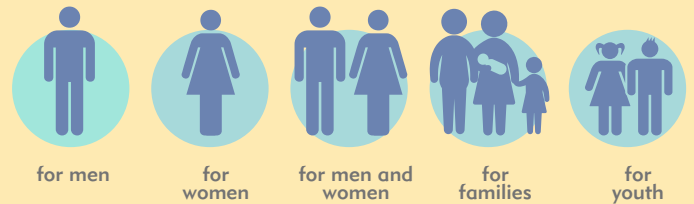
- Case Management
- Some onsite partners
- Triage for housing vouchers
- Diversion from shelter for families

NEW MODEL

Coordinated Intake

Diversion for individuals and families

Homeless Resource Centers

for men   for women   for men and women   for families   for youth

Services/Interventions:

- Expanded case management
- Diversion from shelter for single individuals and families
- Coordinated entry and exit
- Coordinated assessment
- Expanded onsite partners to access resources
- Sober living vouchers
- Women and Children's Detox Center
- Mobile medical clinic
- Improved safety and security model and includes law enforcement participation
- Increased capacity for Residential Treatment
- Increased capacity at The Inn Between

Housing
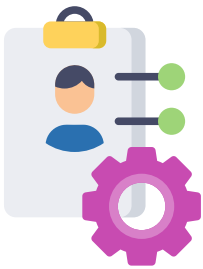
TRANSITION TO NEW RESOURCE CENTERS

The transition from the old to the new model began in 2016 with the legislative appropriation for initial resource center model funding, in-depth shelter bed needs analysis and statewide implementation of diversion for families. The transition process will continue through the opening of the three new resource centers scheduled for July 2019. The final six months of the transition will be guided by a transition team, including issue-specific subcommittees. See below for a breakdown of the transition team and timeline.

TRANSITION TEAM

RESOURCE CENTER STEERING TEAM

- Catholic Community Services
- City of South Salt Lake
- Community advocates
- Department of Workforce Services
- Department of Public Safety
- Salt Lake County
- Salt Lake City
- Shelter The Homeless
- The Road Home
- Volunteers of America

CLIENT TRANSITION (PEOPLE) TASK GROUP

- Catholic Community Services
- City of South Salt Lake
- Department of Workforce Services
- Fourth Street Clinic
- Housing Authority of the County of Salt Lake
- Lantern House
- Salt Lake County
- Salt Lake City
- Shelter The Homeless
- The Inn Between
- The Road Home
- Utah Community Action
- Veterans Administration
- Volunteers of America

PUBLIC SAFETY TASK GROUP

- Catholic Community Services
- Department of Public Safety
- Department of Workforce Services
- Downtown Alliance
- Kane Security
- Salt Lake County

- Salt Lake County Jail
- Salt Lake City Police Department
- Shelter The Homeless
- South Salt Lake Police Department
- The Road Home
- Unified Police Department
- Volunteers of America

FUNDERS TASK GROUP

- Department of Workforce Services
- Salt Lake City
- Salt Lake County
- Shelter The Homeless

COMMUNICATIONS TASK GROUP

- Catholic Community Services
- City of South Salt Lake
- Department of Workforce Services
- Downtown Alliance
- Pioneer Park Coalition
- Salt Lake City
- Salt Lake County
- The Road Home
- Volunteers of America

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY TASK GROUP

- Catholic Community Services
- Department of Workforce Services
- Department of Technology Services
- Division of Facilities, Construction and Management
- Shelter the Homeless
- The Road Home
- Utah Community Action
- Volunteers of America

TRANSITION TIMELINE

Activity	Date
Collective Impact and Homeless Services Site Evaluation Commission convening — new model formation	2015 – 2016
Diversion model rolled out statewide for families	July 2016
Shelter bed capacity analysis	June 2016 – January 2017
Resource centers site selection	April 2017
Operation Rio Grande launches	August 2017
Legislative Special Session — appropriation of $4.9 million	October 2017
Increased funding, expanded services for Medicaid, Safe Space, ID Cards, jail space, employment support (Dignity of Work), women's detox, sober living, treatment beds, permanent supportive housing and short-term housing	Oct. 2017 – Oct. 2018
Resource center operators selected	November 2018
New resource centers operational	June 2019
Downtown shelter closure	June 2019
Safe Space removal / Rio Grande Street restoration	July 2019 – August 2019
Construction of additional housing	January 2019 – December 2019

DID YOU KNOW...
On a given night in Utah, 20% of homeless people are fleeing domestic violence.

LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE STRATEGIES

LAW ENFORCEMENT IS LIKELY to have the most frequent contact with unsheltered homeless individuals. Officers should be trained in the most productive ways to respond to people in this situation and should be accompanied by a social worker, when possible. Use these strategies to mitigate the unintended consequences of enforcement.

Three Keys to Success

1 Coordinate planning and response efforts with the Department of Public Safety.

2 Utilize a co-responder model to pair social workers with law enforcement officers.

3 Establish a targeted response team consisting of law enforcement, social workers, courts and homeless service providers.

RESPONSE ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER

- **Targeted response team**: law enforcement, social workers, courts and homeless service providers work together in engaging unsheltered individuals to connect to the appropriate resource (treatment, shelter, mental health, detox, etc.)

- **Certified crisis intervention team or officers**: nami.org/Get-Involved/Law-Enforcement-and-Mental-Health

- **Uniformed foot patrol** to deter criminal activity in targeted areas (like the area surrounding a resource center)

- Social worker and **co-responder model** to connect people to resources

> Example: Salt Lake City Homeless Outreach Service Team (HOST)
>
> Example: Utah Department of Public Safety contracts for a social worker to be a part of its patrol unit in Operation Rio Grande area

- **Graduated sanctions**: typically used in a specialty court to incentivise completion of required tasks, like staying in treatment, paying fines, obtaining employment, reuniting with family, etc.; if tasks are not completed, the client gets a sanction which could vary based on the severity, from writing a paper to community service to jail time

- **Align criminal justice system** to assist individuals exiting jail to housing, shelter treatment and other resources

  EXAMPLE: Development of a high-utilizer program with district attorney, legal defense, jail and county treatment providers to help the highest utilizers of the criminal justice system through treatment to reduce recidivism

- **"Homeless Courts"** to address tickets and fines in an efficient manner that does not result in unnecessary jail time

- **Intelligence analysis** by specialized teams for undercover operations to deter crime

- **Safety and security plan** for any community resource center; plan should include a law enforcement presence inside the shelter, including patron outreach and single-purpose K9 drug searches

- **Community engagement** through outreach meetings and listening sessions

- Crime prevention through **environmental design**: cptedtraining.net

SPECIAL TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL

- ☐ Understanding homelessness
- ☐ Trauma informed practices
- ☐ Appropriate and effective response for mental health
- ☐ Appropriate and effective response for substance use
- ☐ Resource connection - "No wrong door"

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY ASSISTANCE

The Department of Public Safety has been a key partner in Operation Rio Grande and has implemented new programs as a result of the lessons they have learned. They are committed to assisting local communities in their engagement efforts.

The department can assist with the following services:

- Crime reduction and narcotics enforcement and initiatives
- Homeless outreach
- Social worker
- Training and peer support

To request assistance, call 385-266-6938.

PUBLIC SPACES RESPONSE STRATEGIES

THIS SECTION WILL guide communities in identifying their local resources and access points for specific topics.

Three Keys to Success

1 Coordinate efforts with city, county and state organizations.

2 Coordinate outreach efforts across all related agencies and service providers.

3 Utilize law enforcement affidavits to assist with enforcement on private property.

DID YOU KNOW…

Not all panhandlers are homeless, but almost all are poor and in need.

ENCAMPMENTS

Consider the following when working with encampments:

- Refer to city, county, and state policies related to camping ordinances
- Coordinate efforts with county health departments, law enforcement, outreach workers, and homeless service providers
- Create a peer support system by engaging individuals who have common life experiences
- Provide outreach services to unsheltered individuals
    - Include both male and female outreach workers
    - Connect to services based on individual need
    - Involve individuals with lived experience
    - Connect children to school resources
    - If a camp will be disbursed, provide outreach to individuals prior to and during the event
    - Develop a pathway to assist someone moving from the street into a housing option
    - GIS mapping can be a helpful tool to track locations of encampments

LOITERING/TRESPASSING

PRIVATE PROPERTY

- Utilize Law Enforcement Trespassing Affidavit (https://jobs.utah.gov/housing/homelessness/tooltrespass.pdf)
- Create trespassing affidavits with businesses for after hours
- Increase security patrols
- Increase lighting

PUBLIC AREAS

- Ensure rules and laws on what is allowed are clear
- Review ordinances
- Offer options for places individuals can be (i.e., library, recreation center, senior center)
- Create innovative use of spaces within community

DID YOU KNOW…

emergency shelters can be very difficult places to live for those people who have lived on the streets for years.

ABANDONED PROPERTY AND SANITATION

- Create a response team that could include
    - Public works
    - Health department
    - Law enforcement
    - Utah Department of Transportation
    - Community
- Review ordinances, policies and laws
- Establish a plan to handle essential documents - ID, birth certificates, etc.
- Consider providing public restrooms and hand washing stations available in the community
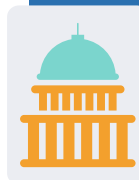
Salt Lake County regulation example: https://slco.org/uploadedFiles/depot/fHealth/regs/sanitation.pdf

PLANNING AND EXECUTION BEST PRACTICES

THIS BEST PRACTICES section walks through several key areas that every community should consider, and it's up to your community leaders to determine what steps are right for your city or town.

Three Keys to Success

1 Establish a community response team.

2 Invest in street outreach.

3 Establish a process for community to report issues related to homelessness.

Homelessness is a complex social and economic problem that affects Utahns from all walks of life.

DID YOU KNOW...
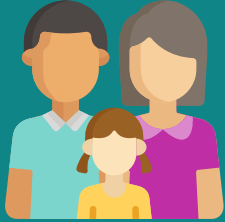
While the consequences of homelessness are devastating for anyone, families are particularly impacted.

ONGOING RESEARCH and practice has shown that high performing homeless service systems generally include six key features:

1. 24/7/365 outreach capacity that quickly connects staff and participants to a community's Coordinated Entry System (connection to resources).

2. Data and analytics capabilities that are part of a community's Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS).

3. A hotline or call center process where community members who are concerned about this issue can call for assistance for an unsheltered person. This feature may be aligned with a community's 211 process (e.g., SLC Mobile app).

4. Policies and coordination activities for staff from multiple agencies to reduce redundancies and ensure effective operations.

5. Policies and financing structures that support multiple engagements with vulnerable persons and prioritization for limited housing resources.

6. A process of accountability and feedback to the broader community.

Reference: https://d155kunxf1aozz.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Framework-and-Description-of-Tools-FINAL.pdf

COORDINATED ENTRY

Coordinated entry, also known as coordinated assessment or coordinated intake, is a process designed to quickly identify, assess, refer and connect people in crisis to housing and assistance, no matter where they show up to ask for help. It can pave the way for more efficient homeless assistance systems by:

- Helping people move through the system faster to housing
- Reducing new entries into homelessness by consistently offering prevention and diversion resources upfront
- Improving data collection and quality and providing accurate information on what kind of assistance consumers need

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM

Communities will find the most success in dealing with homelessness when they take a community-wide coordinated approach that is strategic and data driven, rather than simply a collection of programs and service providers. Creating a community response team that can study data, understand needs, coordinate services and allocate resources will create a more effective and efficient system. Consider the following tasks when forming a community response team.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM CHECKLIST

- ☐ Designate a **lead agency** or organization to coordinate efforts
- ☐ Identify a homelessness services **coordinator** within local government
- ☐ Hold regularly scheduled **coordination meetings** with a cross-sector team (mental health, Community Action Teams, law enforcement, social services, ACLU, etc.)
- ☐ Complete **asset mapping** to identify existing resources and gaps
    - ☐ Identify **resources** (funding, programs and people)
    - ☐ Identify **gaps** (funding, programs and people)
- ☐ Develop **local pathways** to access services identified in the asset mapping process
- ☐ **Engage homeless or formerly homeless individuals** as part of the team
- ☐ Identify local **data points** to guide decision making and outcome tracking
- ☐ Participate in a Continuum of Care **coordinated entry system**
- ☐ Maintain a **"by name"** list of unsheltered individuals and coordinated engagement efforts with community response team and service providers
- ☐ Participate in your **Local Homeless Coordinating Committee**

CONTINUUM OF CARE AND LOCAL HOMELESS COORDINATING COMMITTEES

A Continuum of Care (CoC) is an official body that organizes and delivers housing and services to for people who are homeless. Utah has three CoCs: Salt Lake, Mountainland and Balance of State.

Due to its size, the Balance of State CoC has created 11 Local Homeless Coordinating Committees (LHCCs), composed of counties with similar geographies and demographics. The LHCCs, under the direction of the CoC, coordinate services and carry out CoC initiatives, while ensuring that local needs and concerns are addressed. Both the Salt Lake and Mountainland CoCs operate as respective single LHCCs.

FIND YOUR COC HERE:

Salt Lake CoC (Salt Lake County): slco.org/homeless-services/continuum-of-care/

Mountainland CoC (Utah, Summit, and Wasatch counties): mountainlandcoc.org/index.html

Balance of State CoC: www.utahcontinuum.org/ucc/utah-balance-of-state/

- Bear River Association of Governments (Cache, Rich, Box Elder)
- Weber County (Weber, Morgan)
- Davis County
- Tooele County
- Uintah County Association of Governments (Uintah, Duchesne, Daggett)
- Six County Association of Governments (Juab, Sevier, Piute, Millard, Sanpete, Wayne)
- Iron County (Beaver, Iron, Garfield, Kane)
- Washington County
- Carbon/Emery Counties
- Grand County
- San Juan County

STREET OUTREACH

STREET OUTREACH is the most effective tool in engaging people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Street outreach is conducted by dedicated staff who spend time literally walking the streets and talking to persons who appear to be homeless in order to connect them to appropriate resources. Essential to street outreach is a basic human connection, from one caring and concerned person to a person who needs assistance. There are additional types of outreach that agencies may provide, such as sending staff to shelters or other indoor location, having walk-in hours or extended hours; however, although valuable, these activities are not considered street outreach. Street outreach requires that service providers physically go to where unsheltered homeless people are.

Consider the following factors when establishing street outreach:

☐ Social workers are preferred street outreach staff.

☐ If social workers are not available, trained, focused outreach law enforcement officers can conduct street outreach.

☐ Workers need to know the "system" and be able to keep themselves safe.

☐ Bilingual outreach teams should be considered.

☐ Faith-based organizations may be included.

☐ Utilize peer support delivered by individuals who have common life experiences and were formerly homeless when doing street outreach.

☐ Provide resource information and ways to access.

OUTREACH TOOLS

The Corporation for Supportive Housing has created a vast open source library of tools and resources for outreach. Utilizing these tools across organizations will help create consistent procedures and tracking, resulting in more reliable data and better responses.

Community Response Resources: csh.org/communityresponse

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The most successful community responses to unsheltered homelessness involve the whole community. Utahns have been shown to be among the most generous and giving people in the country, but when it comes to homelessness, people often don't know what to do. Issues leading to homelessness are complex and varied, and the proper response is not always obvious. Community leaders can leverage community support by better educating their citizens about issues related to homelessness, the city's plan for addressing it and how residents can help in a safe and productive way. Consider creating a resource guide for residents and presenting updates and gathering feedback at community gatherings like PTA meetings or on a city website.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE CHECKLIST

☐ Causes and effects of homelessness

☐ State and city laws and policies related to camping, panhandling and living outdoors

☐ Community expectations and goals

☐ Basic safety practices

☐ How, where and what to donate

☐ Reporting issues in the community - what and when to report

  • Criminal - police

  • Non criminal - city hotline

ESTABLISHING A REPORTING STRUCTURE

Determine how to community members can report concerns and how the Community Response Team will report back on to the public on issues and progress. Consider:

- How to report
  - Set up 24/7 phone hotline/email/website or app for reporting
  - Point person/place for reporting
  - Live mapping of camp locations
- Who should respond to different types of issues
  - Local homelessness coordinator
  - Outreach team
  - Community response team
  - Law enforcement
  - Other

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

A better understanding of homelessness throughout the community will help focus community members on what they can do to help. Community partners should include community councils, local chambers, schools and employers. Methods for educating the community include:

- Local media campaigns
  - Highlight community and individual success stories with news media
  - Provide updates via social media
  - Keep city website updated with relevant information and success stories
- Community presentations
  - Homeless service organizations
  - Service clubs (Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, etc.)
  - Churches
  - Community Action Programs
  - Utah Support Advocates for Recovery Awareness
  - National Alliance for Mental Illness

TRAUMA INFORMED RESPONSE

All community members can benefit from learning about trauma, how it affects an individual and situation. Especially consider trauma informed response training for:

- ☐ First responders
- ☐ Community leaders
- ☐ Public
- ☐ Businesses
- ☐ Schools

53 percent of Utah's homeless families and 71 percent of Utah's homeless individuals exit emergency shelters within one month of entering them.

- Volunteer Opportunities
  - USERVE Utah: heritage.utah.gov/userveutah/find-volunteer-opportunities
  - Clothing drives
  - Hygiene kits

FINANCING STRUCTURE

The key to ending homelessness is establishing a systemic response in your community so that instances of homelessness in your community are rare, brief and nonrecurring. While there are some federal and state resources for homeless services, investing local resources is part of a systemic response. Knowing where to invest your resources can be overwhelming.
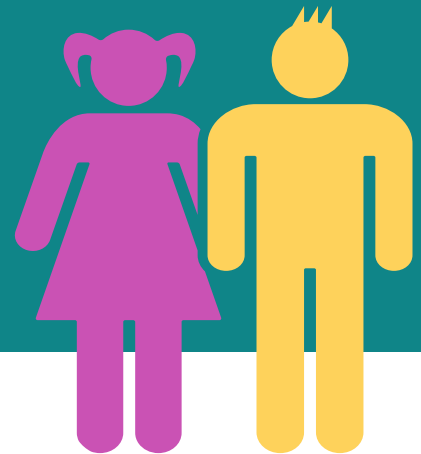
Evaluate existing resources and how they are being used. This approach brings the potential to leverage a combination of local, state and federal funds and helps ensure that you are investing in proven, evidence-based solutions.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE INVESTMENT OF LOCAL FUNDING

- Align local spending with evidence-based interventions and established state and federal priorities and system outcomes.
- Local resources should support interventions and activities that make measurable progress toward system outcomes to end unsheltered homelessness.
- Prioritize local funding for:
  - Local Homelessness Coordinator position
  - Street outreach staff and services
  - Co-responder model (social work and law enforcement)
  - Education and training for the community and staff
  - Identify alternative funding sources (CoC, CDBG, park service, parks and rec, state funding, private foundations, local governments, etc)
- Create partnerships to leverage resources and apply for funding as a community.

Reference: https://icma.org/blog-posts/how-local-governments-can-build-effective-homelessness-system

The negative impacts of homelessness on children are well documented.

RESANOTESURCES

RESOURCES

LOCAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Each community should establish its own list of resources that are specific to its Community Response team.

CONTINUUM OF CARE

- Salt Lake CoC (Salt Lake County): slco.org/homeless-services/continuum-of-care
- Mountainland CoC (Utah, Summit, and Wasatch counties): mountainlandcoc.org/index.html
- Balance of State CoC: www.utahcontinuum.org/ucc/utah-balance-of-state

STATE AGENCIES

- Department of Public Safety — 385-266-6938 publicsafety.utah.gov
- Department of Workforce Services hcdhomelessness@utah.gov jobs.utah.gov
- Department of Health health.utah.gov/contact
- Department of Human Services — 801-538-4171 dhsinfo@utah.gov

OTHER STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONS

2-1-1 info and referral hotline 211utah.org

NATIONAL RESOURCES

- Corporation for Supportive Housing — Community Response Resources: csh.org/communityresponse/
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): hud.gov
- National Coalition for the Homeless: nationalhomeless.org
- National Alliance to End Homelessness: endhomelessness.org