



Ending Chronic Homelessness in 2017

No one with a disability should have to experience long-term homelessness.

The Opportunity

The President’s FY 2016 Budget request includes an increase of \$265 million in HUD’s Homeless Assistance Grants. If funded by Congress, this would help to create the supportive housing necessary to achieve an end to chronic homelessness in 2017. Doing so will not only save and improve quality of lives, it will also save money. Ending chronic homelessness could reduce avoidable public costs such as avoidable emergency department visits, jail, and shelter costs.

The Need

On any given night, nearly 85,000 Americans with disabling health conditions who have been homeless for long periods of time—some for years or decades—can be found sleeping on our streets, in shelters, or other places not meant for human habitation. These men and women experiencing chronic homelessness commonly have a combination of mental health problems, substance use disorders, and medical conditions that worsen over time and too often lead to an early death.

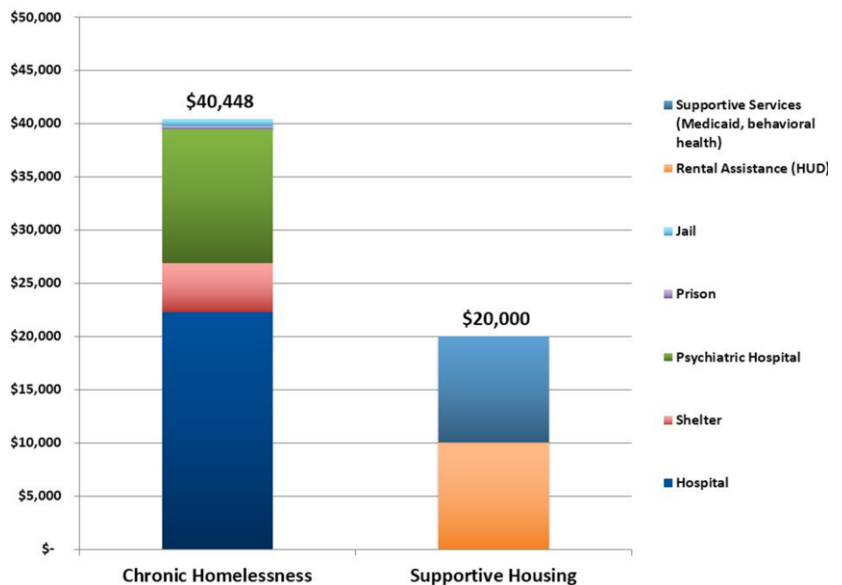
Without connections to the right types of care, they cycle in and out of hospital emergency departments and inpatient beds, detox programs, jails, prisons, and psychiatric institutions—all at high public expense. Some studies have found that leaving a person to remain chronically homeless costs taxpayers as much as \$30,000 to \$50,000 per year.



The Solution

There is a proven solution to chronic homelessness: **Supportive Housing**. Supportive housing has been shown to help people permanently stay out of homelessness, improve health conditions, and, by reducing their use of crisis services, lower public costs. Numerous studies have shown that it is cheaper to provide people experiencing chronic homelessness with supportive housing than to have them remain homeless.

Based on this overwhelming evidence, the Obama Administration has continued the effort begun by the prior Administration to achieve an end to chronic homelessness through the creation of supportive housing. In 2010, the Administration set a goal to end chronic homelessness, and has focused on increasing the supply of supportive housing and promoting the adoption of Housing First practices that help people obtain housing quickly and without barriers and preconditions.



Source: Culhane, Metraux, and Hadley (2002)

Progress to Date

Since 2010, the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness on any given night has declined by 22,892, or 21 percent. Since 2007, the number of sheltered individuals experiencing chronic homelessness declined by 25 percent, or 10,565 people, and the number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness who are unsheltered declined by 33 percent, or 25,632 people. Communities—like the State of Utah—are announcing that they have achieved an end to chronic homelessness. Progress across the country is uneven, however, and in most communities today, there are not enough supportive housing units to end chronic homelessness. Shortfalls in the Federal budget, including through sequestration, have made it impossible to achieve the goal nationally by the original deadline of 2015.

The Strategy

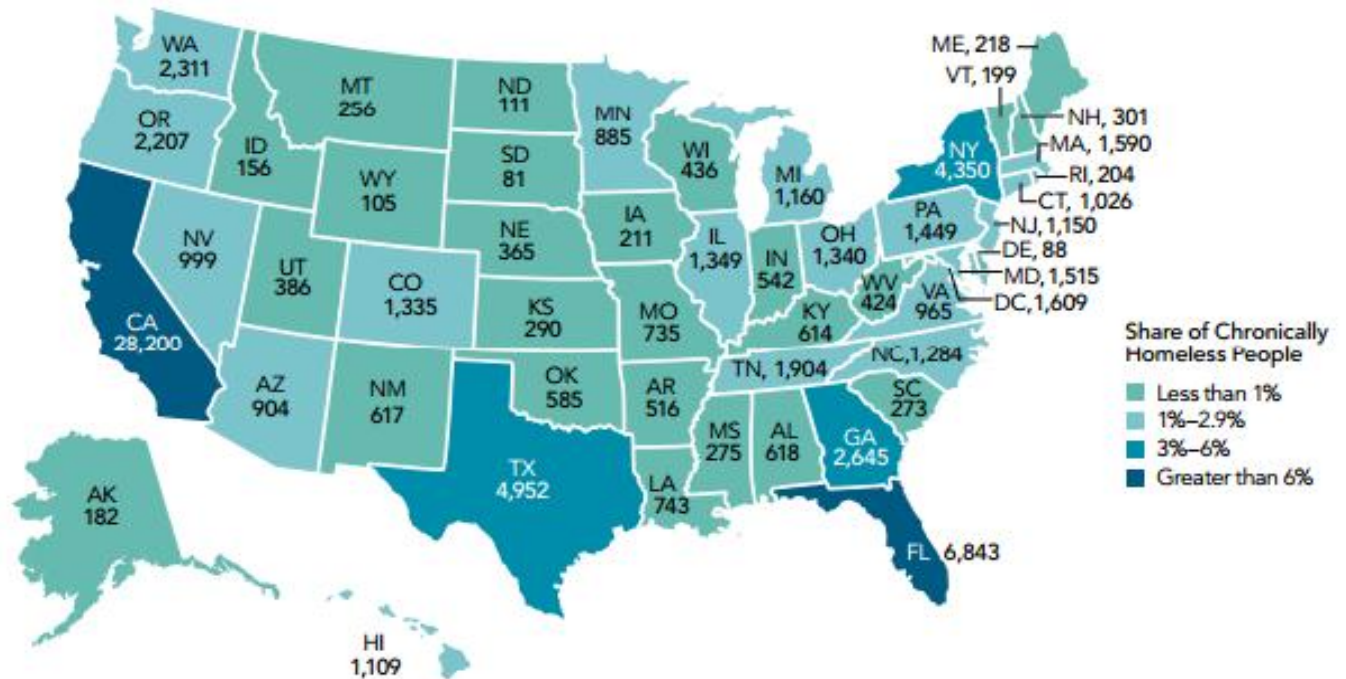
The Administration remains committed to this goal, and has reset the timeframe for achieving it from 2015 to 2017. To achieve this goal in this timeframe, Federal agencies are working with national partners and communities to:

- Create more supportive housing by redirecting existing housing resources
- Leverage Medicaid and behavioral health systems to provide supportive services
- Improve the targeting of supportive housing units to people experiencing chronic homelessness
- Implement best practices like Housing First and assertive outreach and engagement.

However, even the most aggressive use of existing resources still leaves a gap of 25,500 supportive housing units. The requested increase of \$265 million in HUD's budget will fill this gap and enable communities to achieve an end to chronic homelessness nationally.

The Data

Estimates of People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness By State, 2014



Contact

