

## The Ten Essentials to End Homelessness

*The Ten Essentials is a guide to help communities identify effective permanent solutions to homelessness. Supported by research and grounded in practical experience, the Ten Essentials serve as a blueprint for communities to follow.*

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In order to effectively address homelessness, Pomona needs a clear, deliberate, and comprehensive strategy. In *The Ten Essentials*, the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) outlines the ten components necessary in a successful plan to end homelessness. *The Ten Essentials* covers the most important strategies for success: prevention, re-housing options, access to housing and services, and efficient use of data, among others.

### **Plan**

Devise a plan of action. An actual plan to end homelessness in Pomona is a good place to start – a comprehensive, systematic approach to addressing the different facets of homelessness. While planning, it is important to have representatives and input from all the groups affected by this social issue: government officials, business leaders, community activists, and the like. Every solution starts with a plan.

### **Data**

Before moving forward, it's imperative to fully understand the problem. With homelessness, that can be a tall order, as the social problem is influenced by the economy, geography, transportation, and a host of other elements. Luckily, Pomona has conducted a biannual point in time census over the years and has a Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS), required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HMIS collects data about those who interact with the homeless assistance system, and this information can be helpful in understanding the homeless population better and addressing their specific needs. As of 2016, the point in time count will go from bi-annual to annual.

### **Emergency Prevention**

As with most things, the most economical and efficient way to end homelessness is to prevent it from happening in the first place. Consider enacting programs and policies that will do just that. Many existing social programs connect vulnerable populations with emergency services, temporary cash assistance, and case management. Consider ways to integrate with these existing systems or adopt your own.

### **Systems Prevention**

Many people who fall into homelessness do so after release from state/county-run institutions, including jail and the foster care system. Still others come to homelessness from mental health programs and other medical care facilities. By creating a clear path to housing from those institutions—in the form of case management, access to services, or housing assistance programs—we can reduce the role that state/county-run institutions play in creating homelessness.

## **Outreach**

An important role in ending homelessness is outreach to people experiencing homelessness. A key ingredient to this outreach is the ability to connect the homeless population to housing and services. When considering outreach efforts, it's important to understand that many people living on the streets exhibit mental illness, substance addiction, and other negative behavior patterns. As such, it's important to consider low-demand housing that does not mandate sobriety or treatment. Pomona has a highly recognized Street Outreach Team, strengthening their efforts is essential to a comprehensive plan for Pomona.

## **Shorten Homelessness**

A successful homeless assistance program not only works to end homelessness, but minimizes the length of stay in shelter and reduces repeat homeless episodes. In order to do this, assistance programs must align resources to ensure that families and individuals have access to the services necessary to achieve independence as quickly as possible. This often requires immediate access to housing, home-based case management, and incentives embedded into the homeless assistance system to promote these outcomes.

## **Rapid Re-Housing**

Navigating the housing market, especially on behalf of clients with lower incomes and higher needs, is a difficult task. A successful homeless assistance program has housing staff that help with just that. Housing locators search local housing markets and build relationships with landlords. Successful program components include incentives to landlords to rent to homeless households, creative uses of housing vouchers and subsidies to help homeless individuals and families afford their rental unit, and links to resources to help clients maintain their housing.

## **Permanent Housing**

At its root, homelessness is the result of the inability to afford and maintain housing. Remember that any plan to end homelessness must incorporate an investment in creating affordable housing. This includes supportive housing, which is permanent housing coupled with supportive services. This is often used for the chronically homeless population - that is, people experiencing long-term or repeated homelessness who also have mental or physical disabilities.

## **Services**

Services are actually more accessible than they sound – many of them already exist in the community. By and large, homeless individuals can access mainstream programs, including CalWorks, General Relief, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), MediCal, and other existing federal assistance programs. Connecting families and individuals exiting homelessness to these programs is imperative to ensuring their continued independence.

## **Income**

In order to maintain housing, people exiting homelessness must have income. Cash assistance programs are available through federal and state government, and career-based employment services can help formerly homeless people build the skills necessary to increase their income. Mainstream services, including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, should be used for this purpose.