Ending Homelessness Before It Starts:
A Federal Homelessness Prevention Framework

U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

OVERVIEW

Building upon *All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, a multi-year, interagency blueprint, and the System Planning: Framework for Homelessness Prevention, the Homelessness Prevention Framework is an actionable guide to help government agencies, Tribal nations, non-profits, funders, people with lived experience of homelessness or housing instability, and other partners with interest in preventing and ending homelessness (see full list below) to work together across systems, as well as within their own, to better support housing stability and prevent homelessness. Using the information in this guide, communities will be able to develop and implement a cross-system homelessness prevention strategy grounded in the expertise of people with lived experience of homelessness or housing instability, equity, efficiency, and effectiveness.

This framework:

- Provides recommendations for collaborating across systems to coordinate a community approach to homelessness prevention (Building A Community Approach to Homelessness Prevention)

- Defines three categories of homelessness prevention that can be used to structure cross-sector resource mapping and prevention planning (Homelessness Prevention Categories)

Categories of Homelessness Prevention

Universal Supports — Provide equitable opportunities for people to achieve optimal health and well-being

Prevention (Primary) — Promote stable housing

Diversion (Secondary) — Help people avoid homelessness

Rehousing and Stabilization (Tertiary) — Help people quickly move into housing and promote stability once housed

Focus of Federal Framework
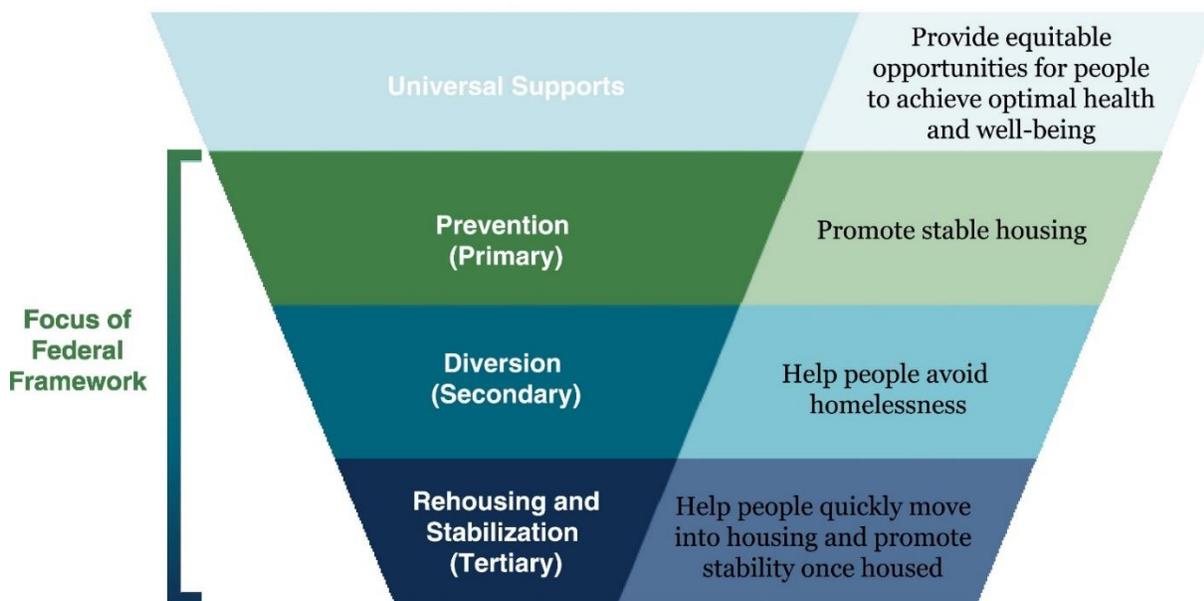
- Shares promising practices for homelessness prevention programs ([Promising Approaches to Homelessness Prevention](#))

- Details resources from multiple systems that can be used for homelessness prevention ([Resources That Can Be Used for Prevention](#))

This framework is intended for a wide range of audiences, including:

- Federal, state, county, city, and territorial governments, Tribal nations, and other units of government

- Systems, providers, staff, advocates, and others focused on housing, health, behavioral health, justice, education, employment, economic mobility, child welfare, other human services, and emergency services

- Providers (including culturally-astute organizations) that support Veterans, LGBTQIA+[1] individuals, families, children, youth, young adults, youth aging out of foster care, older adults, people with disabilities, survivors of violence and human trafficking, people exiting juvenile and adult corrections, and other populations

- Philanthropic, corporate, and other funders

- People who have experienced or are experiencing or at risk of homelessness or housing instability

Note: This framework provides some common language and grounding that partners from different systems can work from to build a collaborative approach to prevention. We acknowledge that federal agencies and community-based organizations that work in various systems use different definitions (such as for homelessness) and terms specific to the programs, grants, and/or services they offer, which are not covered in this framework but are critical to local conversations.

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[1] LGBTQIA+: Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual. The additional "+" stands for all of the other identities not encompassed in the short acronym.

> **"The overall number of people experiencing homelessness will only go down if more people exit homelessness than enter it. Ending homelessness requires working on both fronts—rehousing people who are already homeless while preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place."**
>
> – All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

INTRODUCTION

Safe, stable, and affordable housing is critical to well-being and tied to many outcomes, including mental and physical health, safety, life expectancy, education, and financial well-being. In 2022, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) released *All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, outlining a blueprint for federal action to support a future where everyone has a safe, stable, accessible, and affordable home, and no one experiences homelessness. *All In* recognizes that work to prevent homelessness before it begins is critical to this overall effort. In addition, *All In* recognizes that interdisciplinary, interagency, and intergovernmental action is required to effectively create a response comprehensive enough to address the complex problem of homelessness.

The Homelessness Prevention Framework emphasizes the importance of proactive prevention and a collaborative, cross-system response. Communities have a wide range of resources, services, and programs that can support people in maintaining safe and stable housing, preventing homelessness, and navigating housing challenges without someone ever needing to enter the homelessness response system. These include universal supports such as broad anti-poverty programs, affordable housing, living wage jobs, as well as programs and resources that help people attain a livable income and meet basic needs, including workforce development and education programs, income supports, health care, and more. Although these universal programs require significant resources and political will to implement and maintain, they go a long way toward ensuring everyone has what they need to access safe, stable, and affordable housing.

The homelessness response system differs by community, but often includes emergency shelters and housing resources prioritized for people with the greatest needs. It is designed to triage and support those in crisis when all other resources and options have been exhausted. **The homelessness response system is intended to serve as a last resort, rather than the first response, as it is not designed to meet all the housing needs in a community.**

This framework focuses on the prevention programs and strategies in the middle of the spectrum between universal supports and the homelessness response system. Prevention work, which take many different forms (as detailed in the Homelessness Prevention Categories section of this document), can and should be a part of the work of every sector and system that interacts with people at risk of or experiencing a housing crisis.

This framework is designed as an actionable guide to help government agencies, Tribal nations, non-profits, funders, people with lived experience of housing instability and/or homelessness, and other partners with interest in preventing and ending homelessness (see more comprehensive list in the Overview) to work together across systems, as well as within their own, to better support housing stability and prevent homelessness. The framework is meant to aid prevention efforts by offering shared terms, values, goals, and definition of homelessness prevention categories; providing a series of actionable steps to help communities build a collective approach to prevention; and sharing promising approaches and resources that communities can consider as they work together to improve their local homelessness prevention efforts.

> **Supporting housing stability and preventing homelessness can and should be part of the work of every sector and system that interacts with people at risk of or experiencing a housing crisis.**

This framework will not go into depth about the unique needs of specific populations, such as Veterans, families, youth and young people, older adults, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ persons, and survivors of violence and human trafficking. However, as communities use the action steps and context from this guide to build a community approach to homelessness prevention, it is crucial to include people with these identities and lived experiences and the organizations and systems that serve these populations to ensure that their unique needs are being considered and met through the community-wide approach to prevention.

TERMS AND CONCEPTS TO GUIDE PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Being **stably housed** (or having housing stability) means that an individual or family can stay in their housing over an extended period without being at immediate risk of eviction or otherwise having to leave. This includes having the financial security or stable income stream to maintain the housing (by paying the rent or mortgage,

utilities, and other costs necessary to keep the housing), being able to meet other obligations of the lease or mortgage, if applicable, and being able to meet their basic needs (e.g. food, clothes, medicine, etc.).

A cross-system strategy on homelessness prevention is a plan that brings together partners from a variety of systems to support housing stability for the people in their community.

Housing instability and homelessness are often experienced in conjunction with challenges related to health, employment, education, justice system involvement, and other factors. A cross-systems approach allows communities to provide a holistic response that addresses many different needs, while strategically focusing resources within and across systems. This strategic focusing can also preserve resources within institutions, allowing them to serve more people in need. In addition, cross-system strategies that take a "whole of community approach" to prevention can save money and improve outcomes in multiple systems by getting people access to what they need before they reach a crisis. For example, providing timely health and housing support for someone experiencing housing instability and medical issues will ensure that neither challenge exacerbates the other and that the individual can stay both housed and healthy.

> As stated by *All In: "It is critical that people who have experienced or who are experiencing homelessness and housing instability lead and participate in the development and implementation of policies and programs."* People with lived experience and expertise are best positioned to identify what is working, what is not working, and solutions that meet the wants and needs of the community. They should be included as partners and decision makers throughout the process of developing, implementing, and evaluating homelessness prevention strategies, and compensated for their time and expertise. For more information and resources on how to engage and compensate people with lived experience, see the Identify and Gather Partners section.

Policies and **programs** are both important to develop and implement as providers and people with lived experience work together to find ways to help people achieve and maintain housing stability.

- Homelessness prevention *policies* are laws, regulations, or other administrative actions that aim to keep people from experiencing homelessness or housing instability.
- Homelessness prevention *programs* provide resources and services to specific eligible households to help them regain stability, whether in their current housing or a new unit.

Risk and protective factors

- **Risk factors** increase individuals' likelihood of experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Nationally, studies indicate that certain factors increase risk, including previous experiences with homelessness and/or eviction, frequent moves, having a high amount of past due rent and/or severe rent burden, experiencing violence, experiences with the child welfare system, carceral involvement, and the lack of a high school degree or GED.[i]

- **Protective factors** help reduce the chances that an individual or family will experience homelessness. These factors can include having a large social network, graduating from high school, having access to health care and human services, and receiving cash assistance or a housing subsidy.[ii] Policies and programs that strengthen and build protective factors can help households maintain or regain housing even in the face of multiple risk factors.

Housing First is a proven approach that focuses on reducing barriers and connecting people experiencing homelessness to permanent housing as quickly as possible.[iii] In the context of homelessness prevention, Housing First principles can be applied by reducing barriers that keep people from retaining their housing or obtaining new housing. This approach can include ensuring that there are no sobriety requirements or other unnecessary conditions for entry into housing and services, as well as ensuring that program application processes are as simple and easy to complete as possible. It is also critical for information about the programs and applications to be accessible to those without internet, people with Limited English Proficiency and differing literacy levels, and people living with disabilities. Additionally, under Housing First, it is important for programs and providers to work with great urgency to help people access safe and stable housing as quickly as possible while centering the household's choices and needs. For example, staff in a prevention program might hesitate to assist an individual or family with their choice to stay in or move to a specific housing situation because staff are worried that the household will be rent burdened (paying more than 30% of their income). In an ideal situation the program will be able to help the individual or family stay in or find housing that meets their wants and needs and does not leave them rent burdened. If that is not possible, however, a good way to apply a Housing First approach is to honor the choices of the household and then continue to support them in building greater stability through increasing income, searching for more sustainable, affordable housing options, or other solutions.

VALUES TO GUIDE HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

The Homelessness Prevention Framework is based on the same foundational pillars outlined in _All In_, which can assist in guiding community efforts to develop and implement cross-system plans to prevent homelessness:

Equity	Evidence	Collaboration
Lead with equity to address racial and other disparities among people experiencing homelessness.	Use data and evidence to make decisions by grounding action in research, quantitative and qualitative data, and the perspectives of people who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness.	Collaborate at all levels to break down silos between federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial governments; public, private, and philanthropic sectors; and people who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness.

GOALS FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

There are three overall goals for communities to keep in mind when setting goals and thinking about what success looks like for prevention strategies and programs:

- Identify people who are at risk of homelessness and help them stay in their home or quickly settle into a new one
- Tailor the type and level of resources based on need
- Scale programs appropriately

Identify People Who Are At Risk of Homelessness and Help Them Stay in Their Home or Quickly Settle Into a New One

Many people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness do not know about prevention assistance that might be available to them and/or do not seek out support until they are on the verge of entering emergency

shelter or experiencing unsheltered homelessness. To build a more proactive, responsive system, communities can do the following:

- **Work to identify and support people who are at risk before they enter the homelessness response system**. Screening for housing status in systems such as health care, human services, mental health and substance use, child welfare, justice, education, employment, income support, and more can help to identify people at risk of homelessness and connect them with prevention resources and services so that they never have to experience homelessness or enter the homelessness response system. For more, see the Promising Approaches section.

- **Provide clear, easy to access, up-to-date information on available programs and resources** to people at risk of or experiencing housing instability or homelessness, as well as the systems and organizations who work with them. This can include providing transparent information in multiple forms (e.g. online, printed flyers, shared by service providers), updating it regularly, and making it accessible to people with Limited English Proficiency and differing literacy levels, people living with disabilities, and people who do not have access to the internet.

- **Reduce barriers to accessing prevention programs** (e.g. by simplifying and streamlining application processes, finding ways to expedite application processing, and reducing requirements for documentation as much as possible while still complying with regulations) to help people access prevention support when they need it, before the housing crisis deepens.

Tailor the Type and Level of Resources Based on Need

Many low-income households experience housing insecurity and housing crises, but not all of them will experience homelessness. Among those likely to experience homelessness are some who can stabilize in housing with minimal support, such as conflict mediation or a small amount of one-time financial help. Others may need more support to gain or regain housing stability, such as assistance from a housing navigator to find a new home and a few months of rental assistance. The Homelessness Prevention Categories section of this document describes categories of prevention programs based on different needs and housing situations, and the Resources That Can Be Used for Prevention section highlights different programs that may be available locally. To meet varying needs for homelessness prevention, communities can:

- **Offer a range of prevention programs** that serve the people who are most likely to experience homelessness (along with robust universal supports that help ensure housing stability and well-being for a broader population).

- **Ensure that people are matched to resources** based on what they need to regain housing stability. See the Utilize Data to Inform Your Planning section of this document for more on how to determine who is at the greatest risk of experiencing homelessness in your community.

- **Provide accessible services,** including offering reasonable accommodations and modifications needed to ensure that individuals with disabilities, people with Limited English Proficiency and differing literacy levels, and others who need tailored assistance are served effectively.

Scale Programs Appropriately

Prevention strategies and programs are effective when they are funded at a level to have a meaningful impact on the people they are intended to serve. Communities can focus on two important ways to ensure that their strategies and programs are appropriately scaled:

- Bringing in partners from multiple systems to **increase the resources and programs available** to help people maintain or reestablish housing stability. This can include identifying programs that offer universal supports, such as financial assistance for people with low or no incomes, which can help to keep people from experiencing housing instability and/or can provide support for people already at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Although these resources are often already available in a community, bringing the partners together to find ways to make it easier for people who are at risk of housing instability or homelessness to learn about and access them can help the community bring its prevention efforts to scale. For more on universal supports, see the first paragraph of the Homeless Prevention Categories section of this document.

- **Appropriately and strategically match resources to local needs.** Some of the funds used for homelessness prevention have great flexibility in how they can be used, but they are not always available in an amount that can meet the needs of all people experiencing or at risk of housing instability or homelessness in a community. If there are not enough resources within a particular funding stream available to have a meaningful impact on the population that it is meant for, and there

are no options for increasing those resources, the community might consider narrowing the eligibility criteria to better match the level of resources available. The following graphic, from How to Design, Scale, and Fund a Homelessness Prevention Program, can help planners visualize the importance of proper scaling and support a community-level discussion about scaling and focusing resources.

Improperly Scaled Strategy   ## Scaled Strategy

Focus Population

Available Resource
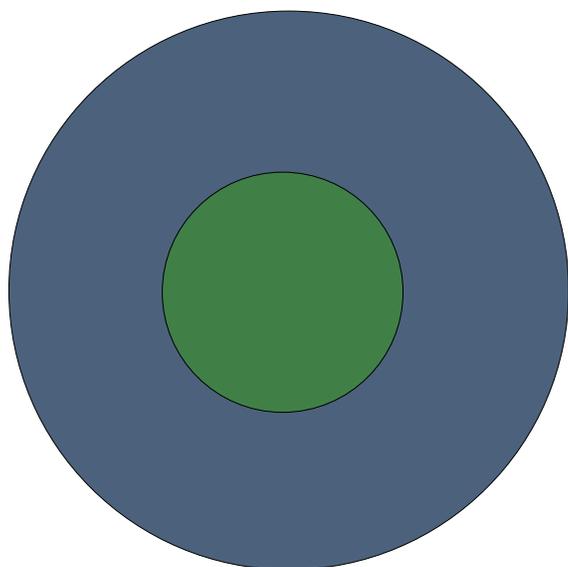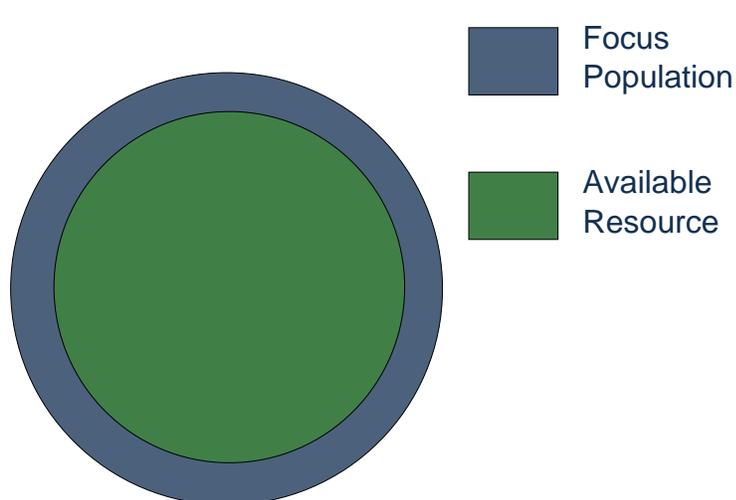
When engaging in the system mapping and action planning activities described in Building A Community Approach to Homelessness Prevention, communities can look at how existing prevention programs are scaled and where there are opportunities both to bring in additional resources and appropriately focus eligibility criteria.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Many systems (such as homelessness, health, human services, behavioral health, education, employment, justice, Veterans, and more) serve people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Some of these systems capture information on housing status, including when housing stability is at risk, and some have

programs to address housing instability, but they are often siloed. There is not yet a strong infrastructure in place nationally or in many local communities to coordinate resources and access so that people can get what they need when they need it. To develop a community-wide, cross-system approach to prevent homelessness, partners can work together using the following steps:

1. Identify and Gather Partners

2. Utilize Data to Inform Your Planning

3. Map Services to Create Shared Understanding of Local Prevention Resources and Programs

4. Develop an Action Plan

5. Implement Plan, Track Outcomes, and Work Continuously to Improve

1. Identify and Gather Partners

When developing a cross-system approach to prevent homelessness, it is critical to bring together a wide variety of partners from various sectors, including people with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability, in co-designing a cross-system strategy that meets the needs in your community. When assembling a team for cross-system collaboration and planning around homelessness prevention, consider the following key groups:

People with Lived Experience: People with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability, including people from groups overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness, are critical partners with valuable expertise who should be a part of the process of designing and implementing the prevention plan. People with lived experience can provide insight into various components of different systems and programs and help partners understand challenges, wants and needs, and solutions. These individuals should be included in the process as decision-makers, compensated for their time and expertise, and supported to ensure they are able to participate (for example, child care and transportation can be provided, meetings can be scheduled at a time and location that works for group members with lived experience who may be working during regular business hours, and materials can be provided ahead of time for review). For more on partnering with and compensating people with lived experience and expertise, see: Engaging People with Lived

Experience to Improve Federal Research, Policy, and Practice and Paying People with Lived Experience and Expertise.

Funders and Providers: Identify who funds various parts of your current homelessness prevention system and which agencies are involved in program delivery. These might include homelessness system funders and coordinators such as Continuums of Care (find your local CoC here: CoC Contacts), government agencies that manage homelessness and housing programs, philanthropic partners, as well as service providers who offer programs including street outreach, emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing.

Other Systems: Many other systems serve people with low incomes who may be experiencing housing instability or are already experiencing homelessness and are critical to the conversations about better ways to support housing stability across the community. These partners may include:

- State, local, Tribal, and territorial government entities (e.g. Departments of Social Services, Human Services, or Health) which can coordinate access to programs and resources such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), utility assistance, and other safety-net programs.

- Agencies that provide identification documents (such as Department of Motor Vehicles offices) can be key partners in supporting access to homelessness prevention by lowering barriers to obtaining the identification required to access some programs (such as reducing fees and expediting requests for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness or housing instability).

- Agencies and non-profits with SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) programs, which help increase access to Social Security disability benefits. Find SOAR in your state here: State Directory.

- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other Veteran-serving programs. Find VA locations here: Find VA Locations.

- The justice system and legal services organizations, such as legal aid programs.

- Law enforcement and first responders.

- Health and behavioral health providers and community health workers, especially [Federally Qualified Health Centers](#), [Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics](#), [Indian Health Services health care facilities](#), and [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-funded behavioral health services](#).

- Primary Care Associations, state- and local- public health officials, and other health system organizations and leaders.

- Providers that serve survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Find programs here: [Local Resources - Office on Violence Against Women, Office for Victims of Crime-Funded Human Trafficking Services](#) and the [Office of Family Violence Prevention and Services](#).

- Child welfare, including Public Child Welfare Agencies.

- Educational systems and programs focused on children and youth who are experiencing homelessness and eligible to attend public school, including activities funded under the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youths (EHCY) Program, the Title I, Part A Local Education Agency (LEA) homeless-set aside, and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) child find requirements. For State-level data and contact information for Homeless Education State Coordinators and local liaisons, see: [Data – National Center for Homeless Education](#).

- Early childhood programs, such as child care assistance funded by the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), which serves children up to age 13 from low-income families; Head Start, which serves young children from low-income families; and Federal TRIO programs, which serve low-income and first generation throughout the educational pipeline. Find local programs here: [CCDF State and Territory Grantees](#), [Head Start Center Locator](#), and [TRIO Project Explorer.](#)

- The Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), of the Administration for Children and Families, funds a variety of programs and services that support youth and young adults and their families to achieve social and emotional well-being, permanent connections, education or employment, and stable housing. Find local programs here: [Grantees of the Family and Youth Services Bureau](#).

- Academic institutions and other groups conduct and publish research to advance the development of knowledge and inform social systems, and some have programs and/or graduate students that work with or may be open to working with local human services organizations focused on housing and homelessness. It can be particularly helpful to efforts to advance racial equity in your community to seek out research and partnerships with organizations and publications that are particularly focused on social justice and the inclusion of researchers who are Black, Indigenous, or other people of color and from other historically marginalized groups.

- The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, of the Administration for Children and Families, provides states and territories with flexibility in operating programs designed to help families with low incomes build family economic mobility. States use TANF to fund monthly cash assistance payments to eligible families with children, as well as a wide range of services, including supports addressing housing instability. Find state programs here: TANF Program Contact Information.

- Affordable housing providers, such as Public Housing Agencies (PHAs), which provide housing and rental assistance for low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Find your local PHA(s) here: PHA Contact Information. To find other affordable and special needs housing in your area, use the HUD Resource Locator.

- Community Action Associations (CAAs) provide a range of services for families and individuals with low incomes. Find your local CAA here: Find Your CAA.

- Culturally-astute organizations and service providers offer affirming, inclusive, culturally responsive services. They are often led and staffed by and focus on specific considerations for people from particular communities, such as specific racial or ethnic groups or LGBTQIA+ persons. For example, the Office of Family Violence Prevention and Services (OFVPS) at the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), funds 35 Culturally Specific Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) grants found here: CDVSA Grants.

- The Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) provides shelter, food, and services to individuals and families experiencing or at risk of hunger and/or homelessness. The EFSP is managed by a National Board and local boards. To find local organizations funded by the EFSP, see: EFSP Website and search under 'Funded Organizations' for your state.

- Non-profit organizations and philanthropic partners that address food insecurity and other basic human needs for people with low incomes include organizations and programs such as Meals on Wheels, food banks and pantries, soup kitchens and other organizations that provide meal services, and diaper banks.

- Federal agencies, community organizations, and non-profit partners provide language access services (translation and interpretation) and resources to meet the needs of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons; additional resources can be found at LEP.gov.

- Employment programs. The Department of Labor has a variety of Program Areas, with several resources, tools, and programs, including specialized assistance for special populations, such as the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program. In addition, One Stop Career Centers/American Job Centers provide tools, resources, computer access, and more for job seekers. The Department of Labor's Job Corps program is the nation's largest residential vocational training program with 123 centers nationwide to house and train youth.

- Organizations that support older adults and people with disabilities. Find local agencies here: Aging and Disability Networks, Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Aging and Disability Resource Centers, and Area Agencies on Aging.

- The Department of Housing and Urban Development's Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program provides grants to communities, states, and nonprofit organizations for projects that benefit low-income persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

- Reentry support organizations and correctional institutions.

2. Utilize Data to Inform Your Planning

To understand how best to focus prevention resources locally, partners can work together to integrate and analyze their data (see list of sources to consider below) to answer questions that may include:

- Which factors put individuals or families in our community at the greatest risk of experiencing homelessness?

- What are the outcomes of current prevention-related programs?

- Who is currently accessing prevention services, and are there groups who are in need but are not being served by existing programs? For example, is our community looking at people served by all the different community partners listed in the Identify and Gather Partners section when thinking about homelessness prevention?

- What racial and/or ethnic inequities are we seeing in our community among people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and how can we design programs that advance equity, consistent with applicable law?

Data Sources to Consider

As the identified partners, including people with lived experience of homelessness or housing instability, begin their planning, it is important to understand what data exist in other systems and what needs to be collected to better understand and respond to local needs. Key sources of information that can help inform planning include:

- **Qualitative data gathered from people who have experienced homelessness or housing instability** will provide the most impactful information about what is working locally, what is not working, where there are gaps, and what can be done to design a cross-system prevention strategy that is responsive to local needs. Communities can use listening circles, listening/feedback sessions, focus groups, interviews, and/or other methods to gather information to use in the development of their plan. As noted in the Identify and Gather Partners, all people with lived experience who are engaged should be compensated for their time and expertise and supported to ensure they can participate.

- **Information from the homelessness response system** can help community partners understand more about the scale, trends, characteristics, and pathways of people who are experiencing housing instability or homelessness. There are a variety of sources available, including:

  o Client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services collected by the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), a point-in-time inventory of provider programs within a CoC that provide beds and units dedicated to serve people experiencing homelessness.

- o The Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) which provides nationwide estimates of homelessness, including information about the demographic characteristics of people experiencing homelessness.

- o The Point in Time count, which provides a snapshot of people experiencing homelessness on a single night each year. Find your local data here: CoC Homeless Populations and Subpopulations Reports.

- o The Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) tracks performance based on certain critical measures. Stella P is an interactive tool that visualizes LSA data and makes it easier to see racial inequities, pathways through different programs, and other helpful information.

- o Navigating Homelessness and Housing Needs Data: Tailoring and Driving Local Solutions is a useful guide that can help people outside of the homelessness response system better understand some of the key data points around homelessness and housing needs. To find out more about your local CoC data, reach out to the CoC lead and/or the HMIS Lead listed here: Grantee Contact Information - HUD Exchange.

- o The Runaway and Homeless Youth Homeless Management Information System (RHY-HMIS) collects client-level data specifically on youth and young adults, including services received, school and education status, and safe and appropriate exits from programs.

- **State and Local Educational Agency data** can help communities understand the scope and scale of homelessness among youth and families with children, as well as characteristics of students experiencing homelessness, such as primary nighttime residence type, populations, and more. For more see: Data – National Center for Homeless Education and Ed Data Express.

- **Other data focused on child and youth homelessness and housing instability**, including:

- o Chapin Hall has a collection of data reports focused on addressing youth homelessness in the U.S., including populations that are disproportionately affected, such as rural, LGBTQIA2S+, and pregnant and parenting youth.

- SchoolHouse Connection provides Child and Youth Homelessness Data taken from Local Education Agencies (when available) that can be sorted by State, Congressional District, County, and/or School District.

- The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides information on the prevalence of behaviors of students that can lead to poor health (and in some cases could put them at higher risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability).

- **Census data** can provide some specifics on people experiencing homelessness, including information in the PCT19, Group Quarters Population by Sex by Age Group by Quarters table.

- **Court records on eviction filings and outcomes** can identify zip codes and other geographic groupings where eviction filings and judgements occur disproportionately, which can help to identify possible focus areas. For more, see: Eviction Map & Data.

- **Corrections system data** from jails and prisons, including the number of people who have received discharge planning to prevent homelessness, can help to identify the number of people exiting institutions who are at risk of housing instability.

- **Emergency response systems**, including 911 centers, police, fire, Emergency Medical Services, and Emergency Department reporting can be aggregated and analyzed to identify gaps in the emergency response, public health, and social services systems that can be used to inform prevention efforts.

- **The Department of Veterans Affairs** has data on Veterans experiencing homelessness. Although local data are not publicly accessible, data use agreements can be created (as appropriate) to inform prevention planning efforts.

- **Neighborhood data from the American Community Survey** (ACS) can be used to geotarget prevention funds to areas with high risks and needs. For example, Mapping Neighborhoods with the Highest Risk of Housing Instability and Homelessness looked at a variety of ACS data to identify neighborhoods to prioritize for Emergency Rental Assistance Funds.

- Information from **programs that serve low-income individuals** (such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Head Start, Medicaid, the Health Center Program, and Special Supplemental

Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) including how many are served, any information collected on housing status, and more can help provide additional context on local needs for homelessness prevention.

- The **Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) Compass Dashboard** provides visualizations on the reach, impact, and outcomes of the RWHAP, including housing.

- The Health Resources Services Administration maintains data on **Medically underserved areas** and other relevant information.

- **Community Needs Assessments and Plans:** Many different programs require partners to engage in community needs assessments processes. Reviewing these assessments can be helpful when planning for prevention efforts to avoid duplicating work that has been done recently. Although the specific geographic boundaries and focus areas may not always align with what the partners are looking for, there is likely still information that can be helpful for planning efforts. Examples include:

  o Consolidated Plans, done by states and local jurisdictions and informed by consultation with community partners and citizens. Find your local Consolidated Plan here: CPD Consolidated Plans, Annual Action Plans, and CAPERs.

  o Community Action Needs Assessments are required by Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) to determine funding priorities. Contact your local Community Action Agency to request the most current needs assessment and community action plan.

  o Community Health Assessments (CHAs), done by state, Tribal, local, or territorial public health agencies, identify key health needs and issues, including inequities, through a collaborative, multi-sector process built on strong community engagement.

  o Community Health Needs Assessments assess local health needs, including social, behavioral, and environmental factors influencing health. These assessments are completed by nonprofit hospitals in partnership with local public health departments, members of medically underserved, low income, and other populations served by the hospital, and other partners.

  o Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) Statewide Needs Assessments. Under FVPSA statute, a state's designated Domestic Violence Coalition is required to develop a statewide

needs assessment to inform and support the state's plan for distributing FVPSA funds. These needs assessments engage a broad spectrum of community partners to provide a detailed overview of the community needs across the state.

o Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) Needs Assessments, conducted by RWHAP metropolitan planning councils, include information on the needs of people with HIV and current resources to meet these needs.

o State Plan on Aging: Section 307(a) of the Older Americans Act requires each state agency to develop a State Plan on Aging. The State Plan on Aging is a blueprint for state government, local government, the private sector, and philanthropic organizations to use to prepare the state to be responsive to the needs of older adults. Plans are developed in collaboration with partners and outline state goals. Find your plan here: Map of State Plans on Aging and tools here: Tools for Planning.

o State Plan for Independent Living: Each state and U.S. territory is required to maintain a statewide independent living council (SILC). The Council and the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) within the state develop a State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). The SPIL is a document required by law that indicates how the Independent Living Network is going to improve independent living services for individuals with disabilities over the next three years. It identifies the needs and priorities of consumers, providers, and other partners and sets forth goals and objectives to respond to them.

o Project CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups) surveys, conducted annually, assess local challenges faced by Veterans experiencing homelessness, identify unmet needs, and encourage partnership action to meet the needs.

o Head Start programs utilize a Community Assessment Matrix to identify the needs of eligible (low income) families in the area, including those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

o Community Master Plans, which provide guidance on land use decisions, can provide helpful context on local needs and priorities.

Using Data to Create Equitable Systems

Racism and oppression and the ways in which it has been embedded in systems, processes, and practices have resulted in deep racial inequities and other inequities in who experiences homelessness as well as many of the factors that put people at risk for housing instability and homelessness. For example, Hispanic or Latino, Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander groups are all overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness, as illustrated in USICH's [Homelessness Data & Trends](#). It is beneficial for communities to work to understand the impact of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, Limited English Proficiency, gender identity and sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and other identities on risk of homelessness and accessibility of local programs when analyzing data.[2]

3. Map Services to Create Shared Understanding of Local Prevention Resources & Programs

Identifying what resources are available in your local community for prevention and gaining a better understanding of them and how they are currently being used will give partners a starting place for what might be possible to better coordinate and build out a community approach to homelessness prevention. There is often great flexibility in how resources for prevention can be used, so it is important to review periodically to ensure they are being used to their maximum ability in coordination with the other sources.

The chart included in [Resources That Can Be Used for Prevention](#) can give you a sense of which systems and resources to start looking into locally, but there may be a variety of other local, county, state, private, or other resources available as well.

To build out a 'map' of what is available, start with the following questions:

- What programs are available in our community?

- Who is eligible for each program, and how are households prioritized for assistance, if demand is higher than supply?

- How do people in need find and get access to each program?

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[2] Guidance on how to do this work can be found in the following resources: [The Alliance's Racial Equity Network Toolkit - National Alliance to End Homelessness](#) and [Data & Equity: Using the Data You Have](#)

- Is there a centralized point in the community (such as a 211 phone line) that people can contact to find information about/referrals to different programs?

- Are access points, programs, information, and other materials accessible for people with disabilities, Limited English Proficiency, and differing literacy levels?

- Are there ways that people interacting with specific systems, such as justice, health, and education connect with resources available through that system, or others?

- How and when do referrals happen between partners in different systems?

4. Develop an Action Plan

Using the data gathered on needs and the information about available resources, the cross-system team can Develop an Action Plan that:

- Identifies opportunities to increase cross-system coordination

- Is developed in partnership with people with lived experience who represent the diversity of people at risk, are decision-makers in the process, and are compensated for their time and expertise

- Modifies how current resources are being utilized to maximize impact

- Builds on/scales housing stability and prevention services that are working

- Develops new strategies to fill system gaps

- Diagnoses systemic inequities and advances racial equity

It can be beneficial to integrate the action plan with other relevant local plans to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize impact.

Tips and Resources for Developing an Action Plan:

- For guidance on developing measurable goals and strategies for the action plan, see: Writing Measurable Goals and Developing Goals and Strategies for Target Areas.

- See the section on Promising Approaches for ideas on what might be adapted locally, and the sections on Values and Goals as a reminder of the context. In addition, A Roadmap to Prevent Eviction and Promote Housing Stability provides a useful list of strategies that can be used to support homelessness prevention, along with examples and models that can help inform the development of goals and action steps.

- When designing the overall strategy, individual programs and monitoring implementation, use a Racial Equity Impact Assessment to identify ways to reduce disparate impacts and advance equity, consistent with applicable law. For more, see: Rehousing Activation and Racial Equity Part 1: Equity as the Foundation and Equity Assessment Tip Sheet. The plan can include action steps around increasing cross-system coordination and referrals as well as steps around work to scale, focus, or otherwise update existing programs as appropriate to meet local needs, and develop new programs and strategies to fill gaps.

- Examples of prevention-related action planning steps: COVID-19 Homeless System Response: How to Design, Scale, and Fund a Homelessness Prevention Program; RHY-PDP Prevention Plan Template; Building Housing Stability Infrastructure.

- Examples of a strategic planning tool: Community Toolbox at KU.

- Ensure that the action plan includes capacity building for staff in critical areas including: advancing equity, trauma informed care, and cultural humility, among others. In addition, encourage providers to build teams representative of the diversity of people in the community who are at risk of homelessness and which include people with lived experience of homelessness or housing instability.

5. Implement Plan, Track Outcomes and Work Continuously to Improve

While developing an action plan, partners can collaborate on identifying the target outcomes for the plan and for each of their prevention programs. The Agree on Measures of Success and Establish a Governance Structure section of The Intersector Project toolkit, which helps to guide successful inter-sector collaborations, has tips, examples, resources, and more that can help partners during this stage of the work. The partners can coordinate to understand which data will be collected to meet the requirements for different funding streams, identify any additional data points that are critical for tracking, and decide how to share and analyze data

together to understand progress on homelessness prevention work happening through multiple systems and throughout the community. Partners can also work together to build an understanding of what information is *not* being collected, but should be, to develop a better understanding of the people, wants and needs, and trends that are not being captured by current systems.

To monitor for inequities, collect data that can be disaggregated by demographic factors (e.g. race and ethnicity, familial status, age, etc.) such as:

- Qualitative data collected from people being served by and working in the system

- Circumstances of households seeking assistance (e.g. housing status, needs, if they are fleeing violence, etc.)

- Number of prevention program applications received, and percent approved

- Length of time from application to approval

- Amount and duration of assisted provided

- Percentage of those that received prevention assistance who entered or returned to the homelessness response system[3]

It is beneficial to review data regularly, not only to monitor the progress of various programs, but also to understand who is being served (and who is still not able to access services), and to inform continuous quality improvement efforts. This monitoring and quality improvement process should include the same range of partners involved in the development of the plan, including people with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability who are compensated for their time and expertise.

[Data sharing](#) can also be useful in tracking outcomes and improving systems. Agencies may consider exploring data sharing to facilitate coordination of services between systems or to understand when households still enter the homelessness response system after receiving prevention services. Any data sharing efforts should comply with all data privacy regulations and include the collection of informed consent from individuals prior to sharing individual/household data.

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[3] For more, see the Track Outcomes and Engage in Continuous Quality Improvement Section of: [COVID-19 Homeless System Response: How to Design, Scale, and Fund a Homelessness Prevention Program](#).

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION CATEGORIES

Universal Supports (sometimes referred to as primordial prevention in other frameworks, such as Advancing Primary Prevention in Human Services: Convening Findings) set the foundation for housing stability. This framework does not focus on universal supports, but they are still critical for communities to consider in larger planning efforts around homelessness prevention. This framework focuses on three categories - **Prevention, Diversion, and Rehousing and Stabilization**, which represent a reimagining of the established primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of prevention used in a public health context, adapted to be more inclusive of human services and address the specifics of the homelessness prevention system.

Community partners can use these categories of Prevention, Diversion, and Rehousing and Stabilization to map the resources available in their own systems and utilize them strategically based on resource type and level of need. Utilizing these categories can give communities a shared cross-sector understanding of the goals of each phase of prevention to start from, better allowing them to coordinate resources and referrals and organize a multi-sector response to preventing homelessness.

Universal Supports aim to provide equitable opportunities for people to achieve optimal health and social outcomes, including having stable and safe housing. Universal supports can be used to prevent people from experiencing housing instability or homelessness or can be used in conjunction with other supports and resources to help those who may already be at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Examples of universal supports include:

- Income supports such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI), unemployment benefits, the refundable child tax credit (CTC), and the earned income tax credit (EITC) provide critical financial assistance to people with low or no incomes, and programs like the Child Care and Development Fund child care subsidy and free early care and education (such as Head Start) can make it easier for families to build income.
- Inclusionary zoning, tax credits, housing trusts, and other structures that require or incentivize the creation of affordable housing provide opportunities for people with low incomes to access housing in their community.
- Policies around rent control, rent increase caps, the right to housing counsel, strong tenant protections, source of income discrimination bans, lowering barriers to entry, and more make it easier for people with low incomes to access and stay in housing.

Categories of Homelessness Prevention
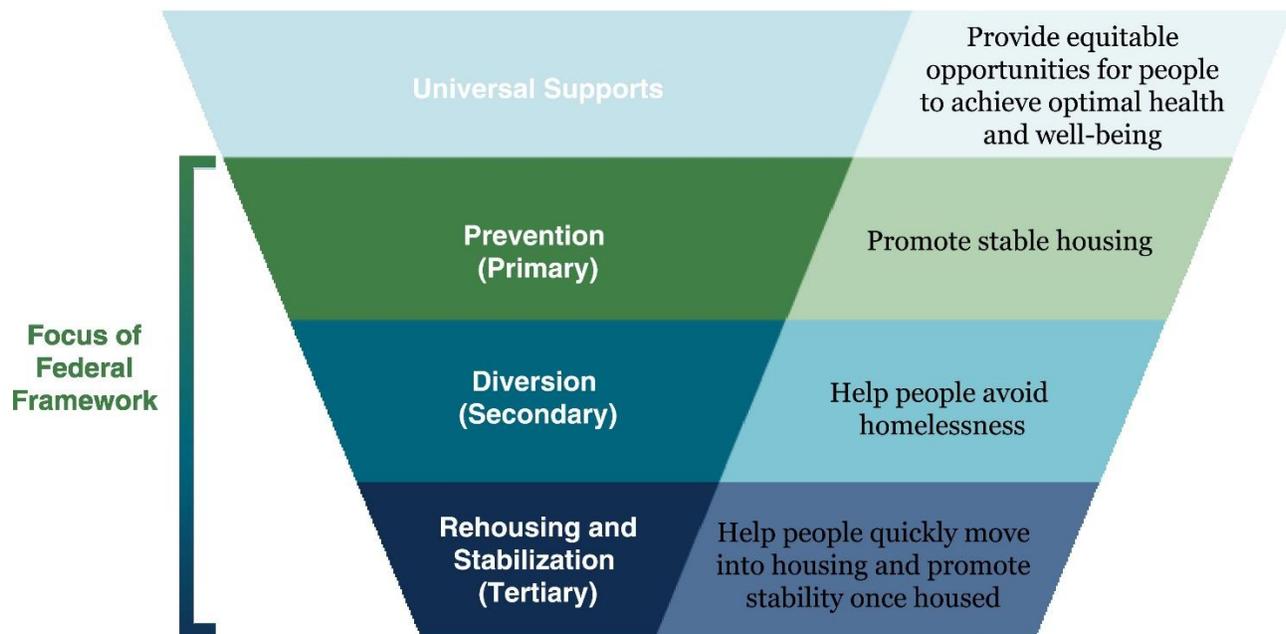
As you look to utilize these categories in planning efforts with your local partners, here are a few important considerations:

- **The housing situations of people seeking assistance are fluid, and many programs can provide services across and within the categories, leading to overlaps. In addition, the categories are focused on general situations, not eligibility criteria for specific programs.** However, the categories can still be useful framing as communities work to better integrate systems, programs and funding.

- All the categories outlined, as well as areas this framework does not focus on (including universal supports) are important to keep in mind as communities think about their overall strategy (crossing many different sectors and systems) to prevent housing instability and homelessness.

- Funding streams are often flexible, and the way resources are prioritized and implemented differs by jurisdiction. Communities can use these categories and the example housing situations as a place to start, and then update based on their local programs and funding streams.

- Communities can use these categories to plan both population-wide homelessness prevention strategies as well as approaches to meeting the needs of specific populations in their communities, such as Veterans, families with young children, youth and young people, people with disabilities, older adults, and people fleeing violence.

- It is important for agencies and providers to be intentional about ensuring equitable, meaningful access, including for people with Limited English Proficiency, differing literacy levels, and disabilities, both to comply with all applicable laws around accessibility and to successfully reach everyone eligible for services. For example, providing language assistance services and ensuring key informational documents and applications are translated are critical to ensuring accessibility for people with Limited English Proficiency. Providing access to Certified Deaf Interpreters and/or American Sign Language interpreters will ensure accessibility for people who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HOH). When developing access points for programs, providers might take into account physical accessibility of spaces (e.g. ramps, accessible bathrooms, adjustable counters) as well as accessibility of remote systems (e.g. considering how people without phone or internet service can access online or telephone-based applications, 508 compliance, translation).

Programs and Policies That Promote Stable Housing

Prevention (Primary)

Primary prevention involves interventions that seek to promote protective factors for housing security for populations with high risk factors for experiencing homelessness. These interventions, among other resources, might include eviction and foreclosure prevention, legal support, rent and/or utility subsidies, workforce, education, and income supports focused on people at high risk of experiencing housing instability or homelessness.

Example Housing Situations

- People facing eviction or foreclosure and have other risk factors for experiencing homelessness, such as previous episodes of homelessness or residing in areas with high eviction rates

- People with low incomes who are rent burdened or severely rent burdened (spending more than 30% or 50%, respectively, of income on rent and utilities)

- People experiencing Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), Domestic Violence (DV) and/or other forms of violence that makes their living situation dangerous
- People who are couch surfing, doubled up, or living in other unstable housing situations

Example Programs

- The Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Policy and Development's Eviction Protection Grant Program is used to provide legal services to low-income tenants at risk of eviction.

- The Department of Veterans Affairs' Shallow Subsidy program, a type of Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) assistance, can be used (among other ways) to provide rental support for Veterans with a high rent burden to prevent eviction.

- The Health Resources Services Administration's Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program provides Emergency Financial Assistance to provide one-time or short-term payments towards utility bills for people living with HIV/AIDS.

- The Family and Youth Services Bureau's Runaway and Homeless Youth Prevention Demonstration Program is designed to support the tailored delivery of community-based initiatives to prevent youth from experiencing homelessness in partnership with youth and young adults.

Considerations for Prevention Programs

- Appropriately scaling programs and focusing resources on the people who are most at risk of experiencing homelessness if they do not receive assistance is critical to increasing the efficiency of prevention programs. It is important for communities to utilize data to inform planning locally to

maximize resources and minimize the extent to which prevention resources are provided to people who are unlikely to experience homelessness.

- Increasing prevention programs and work by other systems and partners, such as those listed in the [Identify and Gather Partners section](#), will help to provide greater access to prevention supports by people in need, who greatly outnumber resources available through the homelessness response system.

Programs That Help People Avoid Homelessness

Diversion (Secondary)

Diversion is intended for people who are at imminent risk of experiencing sheltered or unsheltered homelessness. These interventions are meant to actively resolve housing crises so the household can remain in place or move directly into new housing without entering the homelessness response system. The primary purpose of these programs is to help individuals stabilize in housing without needing more intensive supports, not to create barriers to access emergency shelter for those without other options. Resources that may be accessed in this category include family and landlord-tenant mediation, rental arrears assistance, legal services, [housing problem solving](#), and more.

Example Housing Situation(s)

- People who no longer have or have been asked to leave a temporary situation like couch surfing

- Individuals in the process of seeking shelter or facing unsheltered situations

- Individuals whose lives are in immediate danger because of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), Domestic Violence (DV), and/or other forms of violence

Example Programs

- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds can be used to pay rental arrears for households that are at imminent risk of losing their housing and have a high likelihood of entering shelter.

- Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) funds used for Housing Problem Solving/Rapid Resolutions to prevent a Veteran and family from entering the homelessness response system (e.g. mediation, help identifying temporary housing within social or family networks, financial assistance, program referrals, etc.).

- The Health Resources Services Administration's Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program can offer housing services that provide transitional, short-term, or emergency housing assistance necessary to prevent homelessness for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Considerations for Diversion Programs

- Programs in the diversion category benefit from flexibility, responsiveness, and ability to creatively address the different housing challenges households are dealing with. They focus on building upon the various strengths, networks, and resources households have. Flexibility might include being responsive to highly time-sensitive needs and being as low-barrier (e.g. minimal paperwork, accessible hours) as possible to act quickly to help people retain their current housing or find another solution.

- Consider making resources available in various systems that people are interacting with to reduce the time needed to refer out to other programs. For example, housing problem solving approaches can be highly effective in reducing the number of people who need to enter shelter or stay in unsheltered locations. If health care, education, employment, justice, and other systems have staff who can provide simple housing problem solving without having to refer everyone to the homelessness response system, they can provide quick assistance at a critical time, which may make the difference between someone retaining their housing and needing to be rehoused after experiencing homelessness.

Programs That Help People Quickly Get Into Housing and Promote Stability Once They Are Housed

Rehousing and Stabilization (Tertiary)

Rehousing and stabilization refer to a series of targeted resources that aim to support individuals in the rapid transition out of homelessness and to assist with stabilization supports. This category weighs the importance of not only housing individuals but reducing their chances of experiencing recurring episodes of homelessness. Resources may include programs and services such as rapid rehousing, targeted workforce and income supports, and housing-focused case management.

Example Housing Situation(s)

- People who are in shelter, hotels/motels, transitional housing, or an unsheltered situation.

- People who have recently experienced homelessness and are now in housing.

- People who have left their homes due to safety concerns associated with Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), Domestic Violence (DV), and/or other forms of violence.

Example Programs

- The Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Program's Street Outreach Program (SOP) engages youth experiencing homelessness, living on the street, in unsafe conditions, and at risk of sexual exploitation and connects them to housing and support services to position them for safety and stability.

- Continuum of Care (CoC) or Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Rapid Rehousing is used to rehouse an individual from shelter, offering housing-focused case management, access to educational or vocational supports, assistance connecting to health care, and other services focused on building long-term stability.

Considerations for Rehousing and Stabilization Programs

- In an ideal system, universal supports, prevention (primary), and diversion (secondary) programs will be able to prevent most individuals from having to seek rehousing and stabilization supports.

- It is important that crisis and long-term housing options meet various needs and circumstances, including for adults to stay with their children, partners to live together, people to bring pets, and opportunities to choose between site-based (in a specific building) and scattered site (in private market housing) programs.

- People who experience homelessness have a greater risk of experiencing it again, so impactful programs will provide intentional, focused support to equip them with income, services, social supports, and other protective factors to ensure long-term housing stability.

PROMISING APPROACHES TO HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

The following approaches can offer some ideas for communities as they Develop an Action Plan that includes ways to better coordinate, refocus, and/or improve existing programs and possibly design new ones.

Housing Status Assessments and Screenings

Housing status assessments or screenings within different systems (e.g. health care, education, justice, child welfare, Veterans, aging services, food insecurity and income support programs, utility assistance programs etc.) can identify people at risk of or experiencing housing instability or homelessness early, before they arrive at an emergency shelter or are in an unsheltered housing situation. In the case of an active housing crisis, when someone is experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness, there may be a need to refer the household directly to the homelessness response system. In many other cases, however, screenings can help to identify people who could benefit from resources and services to support their housing stability *now* to prevent them from ever having to experience homelessness. Identifying challenges to housing stability early gives people seeking assistance and the providers they work with a window of opportunity to engage in housing problem

solving and to connect to primary prevention resources and services that support housing stability. For example, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) programs utilize a national Homeless Prevention Threshold Screening tool to help prioritize assistance to those most likely to experience homelessness. This is one example of a tool that communities could consider adopting or adapting within a homelessness prevention framework, if it is appropriate for their local context.

Any screening tools and assessments, as well as the processes and workflows that follow them (such as connections to specific resources/programs), will be most effective when they are informed by local context and developed, tested, and refined in conjunction with providers (including frontline staff) as well as people with lived experience of homelessness or housing instability. Proactively identifying and working to address racial and ethnic inequities among people experiencing and at risk of homelessness, people served by prevention programs, and more will help new or revised screening tools and processes advance racial equity. In addition, communities can explore ways to make collection of data on housing status trauma informed and client centered, as highlighted here: Client-Centered Data Collection Approach: Virtual Reality Series - HUD Exchange.

Housing Problem Solving

Housing problem solving approaches are increasingly being embraced by homelessness response systems.[4] The approach recognizes that for some households, light-touch assistance and minimal resources can help resolve a housing crisis by building on the household's existing strengths, resources, and networks. Housing problem solving approaches are intended to be flexible, easily accessible, and have low paperwork requirements so they can provide quick support for time-sensitive needs. Housing problem solving may involve services like mediation between the household and their landlord or a family member they live with, or an exploratory conversation about strengths and support networks the household can tap into. It is critical to have financial resources that can be used flexibly and accessed quickly to pair with housing problem solving conversations and services. Financial support to help people retain housing might include support with an electric bill, funds for groceries, car repairs, or rental arrears, among other needs. Expanding this kind of work to systems outside of homelessness response could be particularly effective in helping to keep people from experiencing homelessness. Ways to expand this work could include educating and equipping client-facing staff in other systems with housing problem solving skills and techniques, as well as identifying funding within those systems that can be used for light-touch assistance. Examples of flexible federal funding that might be used for these

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[4] For more information on housing problem solving see: Adopting Housing Problem-Solving Approaches and COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Housing Problem-Solving: Prevention Strategies (hudexchange.info)

purposes include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), and the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG).

Expand Coordinated Entry

When embarking on cross-system work to build a community-wide approach to homelessness prevention, communities might consider making it easier for people experiencing a housing crisis to find assistance as a key goal of the framework. Homelessness response systems use **coordinated entry processes** to streamline access to crisis response programs and prioritize resources for people with the highest needs.[iv] In some cases, communities have coordinated entry processes with centralized or multiple access points for people seeking homelessness prevention resources, but in others there may be several different places households seeking assistance need to look. Expanding the capacity of coordinated entry access points, building in 'no wrong door' approaches so people can access coordinated entry from wherever they are seeking services, and increasing the number of programs to which access points can refer makes it easier for people to access assistance and for the partners involved to ensure that households are matched to resources that they are eligible for and that meet their current circumstances and level of need.

Education and Homelessness Response System Collaborations

Children, youth, and young adults both with and without disabilities face particularly strenuous challenges while experiencing homelessness, and a lack of stable housing can impact attendance, grades, proficiency levels, and other educational outcomes. Collaborations between the homelessness response system, education sector, and other community partners to support housing stability can improve housing, educational, and other outcomes for families. McKinney-Vento Liaisons, in partnership with the homelessness response system, can ensure that youth and families experiencing homelessness are connected to comprehensive resources, including rehousing and stabilization services and supports. Educational institutions can also serve as critical sources of support and information about housing and prevention resources for families they serve, who might not know where else in the community to turn for support.

Workforce Collaborations

Workforce programs can play a critical role in strengthening financial well-being and housing stability through economic advancement and, ultimately, lessening the risk of homelessness. For some households in need of prevention-level services, connection to employment services at a point of housing instability may be enough to help them increase income and achieve housing stability. For others, such as those in need of rehousing and stabilization services, combining employment services with rental assistance or other supports may be helpful to rebuild housing stability and reduce the risk of experiencing homelessness in the future.

Data Sharing

Sharing data allows partners from two or more systems to collaborate more effectively. In the context of prevention work, merged data can provide cross-system partners with critical insights into the characteristics and needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness being served by multiple systems and can inform the design of strategies and interventions that better meet these needs. For example, New data: The revolving door between homeless shelters and prisons in Connecticut highlights lessons learned from data sharing between the Connecticut Department of Corrections and the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness and actions being taken as a result, including increasing investment in reentry housing and putting a greater focus on locating housing options for individuals at risk of homelessness before release.

Although there are many state and federal laws protecting the privacy of personal information, such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), there are still ways for partners to share data that comply with all applicable laws and regulations, protect the data and privacy of people they are serving, and ensure that the people being served have an opportunity to provide (or decline to provide) informed consent. Developing a Memorandum of Understanding that includes a data sharing agreement is an important way for partners to define how they will work together and how data will be shared and used. Utilizing a universal release of information (ROI) is an innovative approach that can enable data sharing with multiple partners, such as health, behavioral health, justice, education, human services, and housing partners. There are a wealth of resources supporting data sharing between different systems, including:

- [Interagency Data Disclosure: A Tip Sheet on Interagency Collaboration,](#) developed by the U.S. Department of Education in coordination with USICH, provides tips to help state and local education agency homeless service programs, housing and human services agencies, and provider organizations share data to better serve children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness.

- The [Homelessness and Health Data Sharing Toolkit,](#) [Data Sharing Resources for Health and Housing Partnerships](#), and [Learning Brief: Data-Sharing Between Homelessness and Health Systems,](#) [Data Integration Best Practices for Health Centers & Homeless Services](#) highlight how health and housing systems can and have shared data to improve health and housing outcomes for people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

- [One Roof Data Brief: Harnessing Cross Systems Data to Keep Families Together](#) focuses on how child welfare, housing, and other systems can share data to better meet the housing and wellness needs of families at risk of or experiencing homelessness and seeking to reunify with children or prevent out of home placement.

RESOURCES THAT CAN BE USED FOR PREVENTION

There are many resources that can be used in building a community approach to homelessness prevention. The table below provides information about resources from different federal agencies. In reviewing the list and using it to inform local work, communities can take note of the following considerations:

- **Resources differ widely by community. Whether or not the resource is available, who is eligible, how resources are prioritized, what is provided, how people learn about and access the resource, where it falls in the continuum of prevention, and many other factors will depend on the situation in your community.**

- The mapping services process is important for communities to work through to understand which of the resources below are available locally, how the programs are being implemented, and what changes could be made to be as responsive as possible to local needs.

- The resources in the chart may be a fit for more than one category of prevention, depending on how they are used. The chart and the categories should be used as a starting place, and then adapted as needed to be responsive to local contexts.

- Communities might find value in reflecting on the goals for homelessness prevention and the data collected to inform planning as they consider how to design or update programs and to meet local needs, including for people from specific populations.

- This is not an exhaustive list. There may be state, county, local, private, and other funding available in your community that should be considered as you map resources and build out a plan.

Federal Resources That Can Be Used for Homelessness Prevention

Agency	Prevention (Primary)	Diversion (Secondary)	Rehousing and Stabilization (Tertiary)
HHS	National Runaway Safeline Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program Tribal MIECHV Program Children's Health Insurance Program Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) Program Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program National Human Trafficking Hotline Human Trafficking Services Grant Programs Protecting Rights and Preventing Abuse Aging and Disability Resource Centers Program/No Wrong Door System Health, Wellness, and Nutrition | ACL Administration for Community Living Housing and Services Resource Center (HSRC)	Community Health Center Program Community Mental Health Services Block Grants Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grants State Opioid Response (SOR) program Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) grant program Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) Program Ryan White HIV/AIDS (RWHAP) Program Healthy Start Program Adult Protective Services (APS) Legal Assistance Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As)	Runaway and Homeless Youth Street Outreach Program (SOP) Runaway and Homeless Youth Basic Center Program Runaway and Homeless Youth Transitional Living Program Maternity Group Homes for Pregnant and Parenting Youth National Runaway Safeline Head Start Child Care and Development Fund Health Care for the Homeless Treatment for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness program The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) Supporting Replication Housing Initiative HAB HIV Housing and Employment Project Grants for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)

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Agency	Prevention (Primary)	Diversion (Secondary)	Rehousing and Stabilization (Tertiary)
HHS	Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) Centers for Independent Living (CILs) Assistive Technology Program Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) Program SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) Program		Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program
VA	Veteran Benefits Administration (Connection to benefits) SOAR assistance (SSI, SSDI) Shallow Subsidy Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services	Rapid Resolution Veterans Justice Outreach Legal Services for Veterans Homeless Veteran Employment Services Homelessness Prevention Assistance through SSVF	Rapid Resolution HUD-VASH (Housing Choice Voucher and ongoing case management)
HUD	Housing Choice Vouchers Eviction prevention services for public housing residents, voucher households, Multifamily housing residents Fair Housing initiative programs Family Unification Program and Foster Youth to Independence Vouchers	Emergency Solutions Grants for homelessness diversion Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds used for homelessness diversion	Continuum of Care Program permanent housing programs, supportive services programs that facilitate housing connections Emergency Solutions Grants for rapid re-housing or permanent housing Emergency Housing Vouchers, Stability Vouchers, Mainstream Vouchers, the Family Unification Program, and Foster Youth to Independence Initiative Vouchers,

Agency	Prevention (Primary)	Diversion (Secondary)	Rehousing and Stabilization (Tertiary)
HUD	Mainstream and Non-Elderly Disabled (NED) vouchers HOME Investment Partnerships Program Tenant Based Rental Assistance, when targeted to high-risk groups Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) Eviction Protection Grant Program Emergency Solutions Grant used for homelessness prevention Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds used for homelessness prevention or eviction prevention Housing counseling programs Fair Housing initiative programs Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utility (STRMU) assistance		when used to housing people experiencing homelessness Housing Choice Vouchers in which a PHA has adopted a homelessness admissions preference HOPWA Tenant Based Rental Assistance for households experiencing or at-risk of homelessness Public housing in which a PHA has adopted a homelessness admissions preference. Multifamily housing in which an owner has adopted a homelessness admissions preference

Additional information about programs to prevent and end homelessness can be found in Appendix B of FY 23 Targeted Programs That Help People Experiencing or At Risk of Homelessness; Government Spending Open Data; Federal Health and Social Service Program That Support People Experiencing Homelessness; *All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*; Federal Housing and Economic Mobility Resources; and The Housing and Economic Mobility Toolkit.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Listed resources may be applicable for various categories.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

The Food and Nutrition Service has staff trained to assist applicants who are experiencing homelessness, and programs that are useful in some states where available, like the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP).

U.S. Department of Defense

Service Members with concerns of housing instability, food insecurity, or financial difficulties should immediately contact their commanding officer to be connected with appropriate resources. DoD Civilians can contact their Employee Assistance Program for help with being connected to resources.

U.S. Department of Energy

The Weatherization Assistance Program reduces energy costs for households with low incomes by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes, while ensuring their health and safety.

U.S. General Services Administration

Surplus Real Property Homeless Assistance Program

Social Security Administration

- [Supplemental Security Income](#)

- [SOAR Assistance (SSI/SSDI)](#)

- [Retirement Benefits](#)

- [Disability Benefits](#)

- [Survivors Benefits](#)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Federal Emergency Management Agency

- The [Emergency Food and Shelter Program](#) supplements and expands ongoing work of local nonprofit and governmental social service organizations to provide shelter, food and supportive services to individuals and families who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, hunger and/or homelessness.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

In addition to the resources and programs mentioned in the table above, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has some additional resources that can help serve people experiencing housing instability and homelessness through health care, behavioral health care and human services.

Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services

- [Coverage of Services and Supports to Address Health-Related Social Needs in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program](#)

- [SMD# 23-003 RE: Opportunities to Test Transition-Related Strategies to Support Community Reentry and Improve Care Transitions for Individuals Who Are Incarcerated](#)

- [SMD #: 23-001 RE: Additional Guidance on Use of In Lieu of Services and Settings in Medicaid Managed Care](#)

- [Opportunities for Improving Access to Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services for Medicaid and CHIP Enrollees Experiencing Homelessness](#)

Health Resources and Services Administration

- [HAB Best Practices Compilation – TargetHIV.org](#)

- [The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP)](#)

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[i] [COVID-19 Homeless System Response: Prevention to Promote Equity](#); [COVID-19 Homeless System Planning and Response: Homelessness Prevention Resources](#) ; [Market Predictors of Homelessness](#)

[ii] [Predictive-and-protective-factors-for-homelessness-Lit-Review-12.20.17...-1.pdf](#)

[iii] Padgett D, Henwood B, Tsemberis S. Housing First: Ending Homelessness, Transforming Systems, and Changing Lives: Oxford University Press; 2015. Page. 248

[iv] [Coordinated Entry Core Elements](#)

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