Navigating Homelessness and Housing Needs Data:
Tailoring and Driving Local Solutions

Introduction

No single source of data tells the whole story of homelessness and other housing needs in our country. That's why *Home, Together*, the federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, highlights the importance of collecting, analyzing, and reporting comprehensive, high-quality, timely data on homelessness and housing needs to help us target and scale strategies, track results, and allocate resources to have the greatest impact.

There are a variety of different data sources that can and should be used at the community level to both end people's homelessness and to address broader housing needs. By having comprehensive data at the center of collaborative decision-making processes, communities can stretch the resources they have further, address a wider range of needs, understand where new resources are needed, and get better results.

This document provides an overview of some key data sources, describes what they measure, and highlights how communities can use that range of information to strengthen their efforts to address homelessness, housing instability, and other housing needs. We have used the most recent reports and data from each of the following sources, though they do reflect somewhat different timeframes:

- [Part 1 of HUD's 2018 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR) (reflecting data from January 2018)](#)

- [Part 2 of HUD's 2017 AHAR (reflecting data from October 2016 through September 2017)](#)

- [Education for Homeless Children and Youth Federal Data Summary for School Years 2014-15 to 2016-17 (reflects school years as noted)](#)

- [Worst Case Housing Needs 2017 Report to Congress (reflects data from 2015)](#)

When considered comprehensively and used proactively, the data within these reports can help support every community to respond with the right solutions at the right scale to address homelessness and housing crises among its residents—and to set every person on a path to achieving their personal goals.

Federal Definitions of Homelessness and Other Housing Needs

Homelessness Definitions and Data Sources

There are different definitions of homelessness within federal statutes and programs (see pages 12-13). While recognizing that it can, at times, be confusing to navigate these differences, we encourage communities not to think of them as competing definitions. Rather, these differentiated definitions allow us to recognize meaningful distinctions among the individuals and families experiencing housing needs and crises in our communities, making it possible to more effectively tailor our responses, use our resources most efficiently, and engage the larger array of systems and services to best address current and projected needs.

The biggest difference in the definitions revolves around people who are paying for their own temporary stays in hotels/motels (or trailer parks or camping grounds) due to lack of stable housing or who are sharing the housing of other people due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (often referred to as living in "doubled-up" arrangements or "couch-surfing").

For example, in order to inform planning for its statutory programs, HUD prepares its Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress to estimate: the number of people who are unsheltered or are sheltered in emergency shelters or transitional housing at a given point in time; and the number and demographics of people who seek help from HUD-funded emergency shelters and transitional housing programs over the course of the year. There are no currently feasible methodologies for including within these datasets accurate estimates of the number of people who are sharing the housing of others or paying for their own stays in hotels/motels, due to lack of stable housing.

In order to address their programming mandate of ensuring that every child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, and of making sure students are receiving the supports they need to succeed in school, local education agencies gather and report data that includes children and youth who are identified as being unsheltered or sheltered, but also those who are sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reasons, or whose households are paying for temporary stays in hotels/motels due to lack of stable housing. (For distinctions between HUD and public school data, please see the box at right.)

It also needs to be recognized that the living situations of people experiencing homelessness are not static, and that, for instance, a household that is unsheltered one day may be in shelter or sharing the housing of others another day.

Differences among HUD and Local Education Agency (LEA) Public School Data

(excerpted from the [2017 AHAR: Part 2](#))

The LEA data reported by the U.S. Department of Education and the HMIS and PIT data reported to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development differ in several other ways:

- LEA data are reported by school administrators and generally verified by local liaisons and state coordinators. HMIS data are reported by homelessness service provider staff. PIT count data are reported by communities based on counts of people in shelter programs and unsheltered locations.

- LEA data cover a July 1 to June 30 period; however, data on school children during the summer may be limited. HMIS data used in the AHAR cover a period from October 1 through September 30. PIT count data are for a single night in January.

- LEA data include children and youth living in hotels or motels if they are judged to be there because of a lack of alternate, adequate accommodation. HMIS data include people living in hotels or motels only if those accommodations were subsidized through a homeless assistance program.

- LEA data reports on information on public school children from age 3 through grade 12. HMIS and PIT count data include children under age 3. The LEA data include some youth (age 18 and older) who are still in public school. The HMIS data and PIT count report all people 18 and over in a separate category from those under 18. The PIT count data report all youth who are ages 18 to 24 in a separate category.

Other Housing Needs Definitions

In addition to the differentiated data on homelessness, there are other categories of housing status that we use to assess housing needs, such as:

- **Rent burdened**: Households that are paying more than 30% of household income for housing

- **Severely rent burdened:** Households that are paying more than 50% of household income for housing

- **Living in worst-case housing:** Very low income renters who don't receive government housing assistance and who pay more than half their income in rent, live in severely inadequate conditions, or both

We should use all this data to develop the fullest possible understanding of the range of housing needs in our communities, to most strategically respond to that range of needs, and to assess the impact of our efforts. That understanding can also inform decisions about how many affordable housing opportunities are needed, how much capacity is required within homelessness crisis response systems, and at what scale other programs and resources must be engaged to provide households with services and opportunities that can help address their needs.

Understanding Point-in-Time and Annual Data

In order to analyze the data effectively, it is important to understand—and to communicate to stakeholders and officials—the differences between point-in-time and annual data.

Point-in-Time Data

HUD's PIT Count: Through HUD's annual PIT count, communities count how many people are experiencing unsheltered or sheltered homelessness on one night in late January. That data, which is reported through HUD Continuums of Care and analyzed in [Part I of the Annual Homeless Assessment Report](#), helps us to estimate the number of people experiencing homelessness within a community or geographic region, the scale of the need for homelessness services and housing on any given day, and how that need is changing from year to year. It is important to note that PIT data is not sufficient in and of

Inclusion in Data Is Not the Same as Eligibility

It is essential to remember that methodologies and living situation categories used to gather and report data **do not determine** whether an individual or family is eligible to access a variety of federally funded housing and services programs.

For example, people who are being sexually exploited or abused or are fleeing violence or trafficking while living in hotels/motels or sharing the housing of others are immediately eligible for HUD-funded emergency shelter. (Please see federal definitions of homelessness on pages 12-13.)

Other people included within the data reported by school systems or experiencing worst case housing needs may also be eligible for HUD's homelessness assistance programs and/or for other federally funded housing and services programs.

For example, see [HUD's Definition of Homelessness: Resources and Guidance](#) and [Determining Homeless Status of Youth](#).

itself for these purposes and should be augmented with other sources of data and methodologies that can help project risks and needs, and that can help account for potential undercounts within the PIT data. PIT data also provides estimates that helps us assess progress toward reducing and ending homelessness (see table 1

below). PIT data by Continuum of Care and by state is available at HUD's 2017 AHAR: Part 1 - PIT Estimates of Homelessness in the U.S.

Racial inequities within the PIT data are pronounced and stark: an estimated 40% of people counted as experiencing homelessness last January were African American, while African Americans make up approximately 13% of the general population. Communities can use HUD's CoC Analysis Tool: Race and Ethnicity to estimate and assess disparities by comparing their data with American Community Survey data regarding populations within their local areas.

Table 1: Nationally Aggregated Point-in-Time Data for 2018

Population	Total	Sheltered	Unsheltered	Percentage Change 2017-2018	Percentage Change 2010-2018
All People	552,830	358,363 (65%)	194,467 (35%)	0.3%	-13%
Individuals*	372,417	194,340 (52%)	178,077 (48%)	2%	-7%
Veterans	37,898	23,312 (62%)	14,566 (38%)	5%	-49%
Chronically Homeless People	88,640	30,754 (35%)	57,886 (65%)	2%	-16%
Family Households	56,342	51,513 (91%)	4,829 (9%)	-3%	-29%
Unaccompanied Youth	36,361 unaccompanied youth under the age of 25 were counted, including 8,724 parenting youth and young adults. Federal agencies will be developing a trend analysis beginning with the 2019 PIT count data, when the unsheltered count is again required, by comparing that data with the baseline data collected in 2017.				

* "Individual" refers to a person who is not part of a family with children during an episode of homelessness. Individuals may be experiencing homelessness as single adults, as unaccompanied youth (ages 18-24), or in multiple-adult or multiple-child households.

Worst-Case Housing. HUD's Worst Case Housing Needs 2017 Report to Congress, based upon the American Housing Survey conducted by the Census Bureau in 2015, provides an estimate of how many renters there are at any given time with worst-case housing needs, indicating that they: 1) have very low incomes, lack housing assistance, and have severe rent burdens (in approximately 96% of cases); 2) live in severely inadequate housing (in approximately 2% of cases); or 3) are experiencing both problems (in approximately 3% of cases). As the report notes: "Among very low-income renters in 2015, only 25% of households had rental assistance and an additional 43% had worst case needs for assisted or other affordable housing. In other words, only a small share of very low-income renters—32%—avoided severe housing problems in the unassisted private rental market in 2015."

The survey found that there were an estimated 8.30 million renters with worst-case housing needs in 2015, representing an increase of 8% (582,000 households) since the 2013 survey. The number of households with worst case needs have increased by 66% since 2001, with historic increases occurring between 2007 and 2011, when the combination of mortgage foreclosures, widespread unemployment, and shrinking renter incomes dramatically expanded severe housing problems.

When compared to representation in the general public, the data also indicates significant over-representation of: non-Hispanic Black persons, who represent approximately 13% of the total population, but 21.7% of renters experiencing worst-case housing needs; and Hispanic persons, who represent approximately 16% of the total population, but 25.3% of renters experiencing worst-case housing needs.

For the first time, HUD's 2017 report provides local estimates of worst case housing needs for 25 select metropolitan areas, representing the 15 largest metropolitan areas and an additional 10 that are a subset of the 16th to 50th largest metropolitan areas, which can help inform analysis and understanding of needs within those communities.

Annual Data

Sources of annual data help us understand and estimate the number and characteristics of people who experience housing instability or homelessness over the course of a year. Such data are critical to projecting the level of need in our communities and the resources necessary on an annual basis to provide every individual and family with an appropriate and effective level of housing assistance and connections to services to address those needs.

Homeless Management Information Systems: In Part 2 of the 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report, HUD reports on data that is gathered through local homeless management information systems (HMIS). This data estimates the number and demographics of people who use emergency shelters and transitional housing projects during a 12-month period.

The most recent report estimated that 1.42 million people experienced homelessness in shelters at some point during 2017, a 0.3% decline between 2016 and 2017 and an 11% decrease since 2010. Local data should be available through the organization that manages your local Continuum of Care's HMIS data.

Some notable disparities in the data include:

- African Americans were present in the sheltered homeless population at roughly 3.4 times the rate of the total U.S. population (43% vs. 12.7%).

- Men outnumbered women (62.4% to 37.6%) among all adults experiencing sheltered homelessness, in contrast to the U.S. adult population, where the proportion of men to women is roughly equal.

- Adults with disabilities account for 44.4% of all adults experiencing homelessness in shelter over the course of a year, while they make up only 15.9% of the total U.S. adult population.
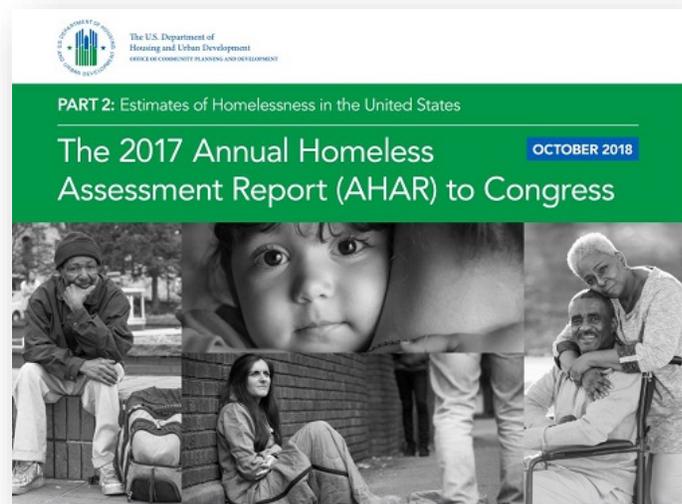
Local Education Agency (LEA) Public School Data: For understanding the scope and scale of homelessness among youth and families with children, we also closely consider data gathered by schools for the U.S. Department of Education. This data from the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program documents the number of children enrolled in public schools who are identified as experiencing homelessness at some point during the school year, including students who were identified as: unsheltered; in shelters, transitional housing, or awaiting foster care placement; sharing the housing of others ("doubled-up") due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; or living in hotels/motels due to the lack of alternate, adequate accommodations.

FEBRUARY 2019

FEDERAL DATA SUMMARY
SCHOOL YEARS 2014-15 TO 2016-17
EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HOMELESS EDUCATION
UNC GREENSBORO

As documented in table 2, during the 2016-2017 school year:

- Nearly 76% of the students identified as experiencing homelessness were sharing the housing of other people because of loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;

- Nearly 14% were in shelters, transitional housing, or awaiting foster care placement;

- More than 6% were in hotels/motels; and nearly 4% were unsheltered.

- The largest numeric increase was in the category of students who were sharing the housing of other people, with an increase of nearly 67,000 students (a 7% increase) since the 2014-2015 school year.

- The largest percentage increase was in the category of students who were unsheltered, with an increase of more than 10,700 students (a 27% increase).
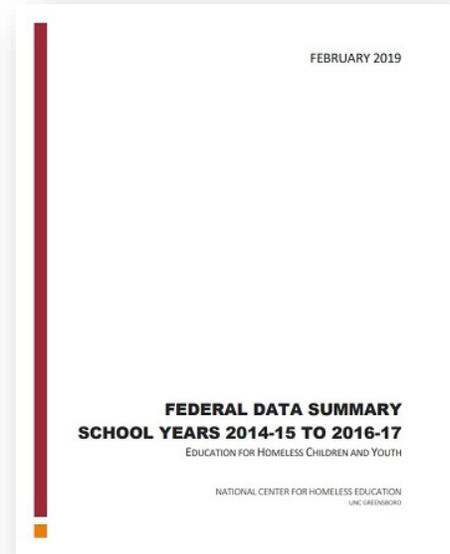
The EHCY data doesn't include young children who are not enrolled in preschool programs administered by LEAs, youth beyond high-school age, youth receiving an education outside of the public school system, or those who are disconnected from school entirely. It does, however, help us understand the challenges facing families, children, and young people in our communities and speaks to the significant need for access to a range of affordable housing options, including both options that are provided through the private market and also through publicly subsidized programs.

Looking ahead to the 2019-20 school year, the Department of Education has proposed new data collection requirements regarding race and ethnicity for students identified as experiencing homelessness, providing communities with increased understanding of the impact of homelessness among different sub-groups of students, including those who may be disproportionately impacted.

In addition to the federal data summary, state-level data and local education agency data are also available.

Table 2: Number of Enrolled Homeless Students: Total and By Primary Nighttime Residence

Residence at Time Initially Identified as Experiencing Homelessness	School Year 2014-2015	School Year 2015-2016	School Year 2016-2017	% Change Over Last 3 School Years
Total*	1,263,323	1,304,803	1,355,821	7.3%
Shelters, transitional housing, awaiting foster care placement	181,386 (14.4%)	186,868 (14.4%)	187,605 (13.9%)	3.4%
Doubled-up/Sharing the housing of others because of loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason	958,495 (75.9%)	985,932 (75.8%)	1,025,416 (75.8%)	7.0%
Hotels/Motels, due to lack of alternate, adequate accommodations	82,159 (6.5%)	84,963 (6.5%)	90,013 (6.6%)	9.6%
Unsheltered	39,421 (3.1%)	43,194 (3.3%)	50,145 (3.7%)	27.2%

* See page 14-15 of Education for Homeless Children and Youth Federal Data Summary for School Years 2014-15 to 2016-17 for detailed explanation of why the total number of students identified as experiencing homelessness does not equal the sum of the number of students by primary nighttime residence.

Importance of Gathering Real-Time Data

In addition to being able to analyze and use the sources of data described above to develop estimates and projections, to drive resource decisions, and to measure progress, in order to provide specific housing and services interventions to households on a day-to-day basis, however, communities also need to develop real-time information regarding everyone experiencing homelessness. Real-time data is critically important to have the most current, actionable information possible and also because people's living situations and services needs are not static but, rather, can change over time and even from day to day.

Communities are using "by-name lists" or "active lists" to ensure that on any given day, they have full and reliable information about everyone experiencing homelessness within their communities, sometimes beginning with specific subpopulations, such as Veterans or people who are chronically homelessness, but with intent to develop capacity to have such real-time information for everyone. In some communities, those "by-name lists" are embedded within their HMIS and other data systems, and communities are also enhancing their capacity to use HMIS data and reporting to strengthen performance measurement, streamline referral processes, and strengthen the implementation of coordinated entry systems.

Responding to the Data at the Local Level

Individuals and families across the United States need the foundation of safe and stable housing to achieve their educational, professional, and personal goals. All these sources of data are critical to understanding and responding to homelessness and housing needs in our communities. When looked at comprehensively, the data helps to ensure that we respond with the right solutions, at the right scale, to address current and projected housing needs and crises.

Communities should use this full range of data on the different experiences of individuals and families to respond with a full array of service and housing interventions and opportunities— prevention and diversion, crisis services, emergency shelter, affordable housing, rapid re-housing, supportive housing, and other tailored solutions and services—that can help households attain and sustain housing and help set them on a path to lasting success.

As described within table 3 below, there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and it is important to remember that the living situations of households experiencing homelessness are not static. But the data can help drive conversations about your community's current resources and efforts to end homelessness and to address a broad range of housing needs. You can find other Tools for Action on our website to help your community implement strategies described below.

Table 3: Key Questions in Response to Your Community's Data

If your data indicates …	Discuss the following key questions …
A large or increasing unsheltered population	☐ Can your community deploy additional strategies to **strengthen and coordinate outreach and engagement to ensure all people experiencing unsheltered homelessness are being identified**, are known by name, regularly contacted, and understand the shelter, services, and housing opportunities available to them?
	☐ Can your community **assess whether there are subpopulations among the unsheltered population that are increasing**, such as youth under 25 or survivors of domestic violence, in order to develop targeted outreach and engagement strategies?
	☐ Have you obtained aggregate LEA or county-level counts of students identified as experiencing **unsheltered** homelessness? **Primary Nighttime Residence (PNR) counts by CoC** are also included in a crosswalk of CoC, LEA, and RHY contacts.
	☐ If shelter utilization rates are low, can your community **assess the current shelter model and identify opportunities to increase shelter utilization, such as through removing or lowering barriers** that prevent people from seeking, accessing, or being eligible for shelter, or through implementation of age- and culturally appropriate practices?
	☐ If utilization rates are not low, can your community **implement efforts to reduce lengths of stay in emergency shelter and improve housing placement rates through a variety of strategies and resources**, including problem-solving services,

	rapid re-housing opportunities, and connections to other affordable housing opportunities, therefore maximizing the number of households that can be assisted each year through the existing supply of shelter?
	☐ Can your community **prioritize and target any people who long-term stayers in shelter for specialized service and housing interventions,** like supportive housing, in order to reduce the number of people who are using a significant number of bed nights and maximize the number of people that can be assisted?
	☐ Can your community also maximize shelter capacity by **strengthening diversion efforts, assisting people experiencing housing crises to not have to enter emergency shelter to access assistance by helping them retain or identify immediate safe alternate housing arrangements** and, if necessary, connecting them with other services and financial assistance to help them access or sustain permanent housing?
	☐ Can your community **strengthen prevention and in-reach efforts to prevent unsheltered homelessness through stronger discharge planning practices in coordination with public systems**, including but not limited to state institutions, county facilities, hospitals, and foster care and child welfare agencies?
	☐ Can your community **strengthen efforts to link people who are unsheltered to permanent housing opportunities even if they do not enter shelter**?
	☐ If you have a growing population of unsheltered people within specific population groups, such as youth under 25, families with children, survivors of domestic violence, people with disabilities, or others, can your community **expand the scope and scale of available population-specific housing and services interventions**?
	☐ Can your community assess factors influencing demand for shelter, such as seasonal variations, eviction rates, and/or changes in housing market, and **determine whether, even if all the strategies above are implemented, additional low-barrier temporary shelter opportunities are necessary** in order both to protect people's health and safety and to provide rapid exits from homelessness to permanent housing?
A large or increasing sheltered population	☐ Can your community **implement efforts to reduce lengths of stay in emergency shelter and improve housing placement rates through a variety of strategies and resources**, including problem-solving services, rapid re-housing opportunities, and connections to other affordable housing opportunities, therefore maximizing the number of households that can be assisted each year through the existing supply of shelter?
	☐ Can your community **prioritize and target any people who are long-term stayers in shelter for specialized service and housing interventions**, like supportive housing, in order to reduce the number of people who are using a significant number of bed nights and maximize the number of people that can be assisted?
	☐ If you have a growing population of unsheltered people within specific population groups, such as youth under 25, families with children, survivors of domestic violence, people with disabilities, or others, can your community **expand the scope and scale of available population-specific housing and services interventions**?

	☐ Have you obtained aggregate LEA or county-level counts of students identified as experiencing **sheltered** homelessness? **Primary Nighttime Residence (PNR) counts by CoC** are also included in a [crosswalk of CoC, LEA, and RHY contacts]().
	☐ Can your community maximize shelter capacity by **strengthening diversion efforts, assisting people experiencing housing crises to not have to enter emergency shelter to access assistance by helping them retain or identify immediate safe alternate housing arrangements** and, if necessary, connecting them with other services and financial assistance to help them access or sustain permanent housing?
	☐ Can your community **prioritize people staying in shelter for access to employment and job placement services and other supportive services**, including child care and transportation, to help ensure their successful stabilization in permanent housing?
	☐ Can your community **assess factors influencing demand for shelter, such as seasonal variations, eviction rates, and/or changes in housing market, and determine whether, even if all the strategies above are implemented, additional low-barrier temporary shelter opportunities are necessary** in order both to protect people's health and safety and to provide rapid exits from homelessness to permanent housing?
	☐ Can your community **strengthen efforts to link people who are unsheltered to permanent housing opportunities**, reducing potential demand for shelter?

A large or increasing number of people paying for their own temporary stays in hotels/motels due to lack of stable housing	☐ Can your community **partner with owners/operators of hotels/motels to regularly identify and engage people who are staying in such temporary living arrangements** to assess their risks and safety and to make sure they understand any services and housing opportunities available to them or for which they may be prioritized?
	☐ Have you obtained aggregate LEA or county-level counts of students identified as **living in motels/hotels**? **Primary Nighttime Residence (PNR) counts by CoC** are also included in a [crosswalk of CoC, LEA, and RHY contacts]().
	☐ Can your community **provide people who are living in hotels/motels at their own expense with improved access to permanent housing options for which they are eligible**, or assist them to find other safe, temporary living arrangements while they obtain permanent housing?
	☐ Can your community **prioritize people staying in hotels/motels for access to employment and job placement services, and other mainstream resources and programs**, to help them increase their incomes and access other housing opportunities and to ensure their successful stabilization in permanent housing?
	☐ Can your community identify resources to **assist households to exit these living arrangements through a variety of strategies and resources**, including problem-solving services, rapid re-housing opportunities, and connections to other affordable housing opportunities?

	☐ Can your community **increase access to units in the private rental market through partnerships with owners and landlords**, assistance to reduce screening barriers, flexible financial assistance, and other landlord incentives?
	☐ Can your community **assess whether the pipeline of affordable housing meets the projected needs within the community for all populations and, if needed, seek strategies to expand affordable housing opportunities**, including through **changes to regulations regarding land use and zoning requirements** and through **funding the development of dedicated affordable units**, to provide appropriate and affordable alternatives?
A large or increasing number of people sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason	☐ Can your community improve efforts and strengthen partnerships to **identify those sharing the housing of others to assess their risks and safety** and to make sure they understand any services and housing opportunities available to them or for which they may be prioritized?
	☐ Have you obtained aggregate LEA or county-level counts of students identified as **doubled-up**? **Primary Nighttime Residence (PNR) counts by CoC** are also included in a crosswalk of CoC, LEA, and RHY contacts.
	☐ Can your community **provide people who are temporarily sharing the housing of others with improved access to other permanent housing options for which they are eligible**, or assist them to find other safe, temporary living arrangements while they obtain permanent housing?
	☐ **Can your community prioritize people in such circumstances for access to employment and job placement services, and other mainstream resources and programs, to help increase their incomes** and to access other housing opportunities and ensure their successful stabilization in that housing?
	☐ Can your community identify resources to **assist households to exit these living arrangements through a variety of strategies and resources**, including problem-solving services, rapid re-housing opportunities, and connections to other affordable housing opportunities?
	☐ Can your community **increase access to units in the private rental market through partnerships with owners and landlords**, assistance to reduce screening barriers, flexible financial assistance, and other landlord incentives?
	☐ Can your community **assess whether the pipeline of affordable housing meets the projected needs within the community for all populations and, if needed, seek strategies to expand affordable housing opportunities**, including through **changes to regulations regarding land use and zoning requirements** and through **funding the development of dedicated affordable units**, to provide appropriate and affordable alternatives?
A large or increasing number of people experiencing worst-case housing needs	☐ Can your community improve efforts and strengthen partnerships to **identify those experiencing worst case housing needs to assess their risks and safety** and to make sure they understand any services and housing opportunities available to them or for which they may be prioritized?

☐ Can your community **identify those living in severely inadequate conditions and prioritize them for crisis services or assist them to find alternate safe temporary or permanent living arrangements**, and connect them with other services and financial assistance to help them access or sustain permanent housing?

☐ Have you obtained aggregate LEA or county-level counts of students identified as **experiencing homelessness**? **Primary Nighttime Residence (PNR) counts by CoC** are also included in a [crosswalk of CoC, LEA, and RHY contacts](#).

☐ Can your community **provide people who are experiencing worst case housing needs with improved access to other permanent housing options for which they are eligible**, or assist them to find other safe, temporary living arrangements while they obtain permanent housing?

☐ Can your community **prioritize people experiencing worst case housing needs for access to employment and job placement services, and other mainstream resources and programs, to help increase their incomes**, to reduce their housing cost burdens, and/or to help them access other housing opportunities and ensure their successful stabilization in that housing?

☐ Can your community identify resources to **assist households to exit these living arrangements through a variety of strategies and resources**, including problem-solving services, rapid re-housing opportunities, and connections to other affordable housing opportunities?

☐ Can your community **increase access to more affordable units in the private rental market through partnerships with owners and landlords**, assistance to reduce screening barriers, flexible financial assistance, and other landlord incentives?

☐ Can your community **assess whether the pipeline of affordable housing meets the projected needs within the community for all populations and, if needed, seek strategies to expand affordable housing opportunities**, including through changes to regulations regarding land use and zoning requirements and through funding the development of dedicated affordable units, to provide appropriate and affordable alternatives?

Appendix: Federal Definitions of Homelessness

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD defines homelessness for their programming into four categories. The categories are:

Category 1: Literally Homeless

Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

   (i)   Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;

   (ii)   Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, and local government programs); or

   (iii)   Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution

Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness

Individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:

   (i)   Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;

   (ii)   No subsequent residence has been identified; and

   (iii)   The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing

Category 3: Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes

Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:

   (i)   Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes;

   (ii)   Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application;

   (iii)   Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during in the preceding 60 days; and

   (iv)   Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers

Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence

Any individual or family who:

   (i)   Is fleeing or attempting to flee their housing or the place they are staying because of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions related to violence that has taken place in the house or has made them afraid to return to the house, including:

        • Trading sex for housing

        • Trafficking

        • Physical abuse

        • Violence (or perceived threat of violence) because of the youth's sexual orientation;

   (ii)   Has no other residence; and

   (iii)   Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

Department of Education (ED)

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)) defines homeless children and youth as: A) individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 11302(a)(1) of this title); and B) includes

i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;

ii. children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 11302(a)(2)(C) of this title);

iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

iv. migratory children (as such term is defined in section 6399 of title 20) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines 'unaccompanied youth' as a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian (42 U.S.C. § 11434a(6)).

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Runaway and Homeless Youth Act

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) (42 U.S.C. §5732a) defines homeless youth as individuals who are "less than 21 years of age … for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and who have no other safe alternative living arrangement." This definition, used for the Basic Center and Transitional Living programs, includes only those youth who are unaccompanied by families or caregivers. Additionally,

- For the **Basic Center Program**, a homeless youth is an individual who is less than 18 years of age, or is less than a higher maximum age if the state where the center is located has an applicable state or local law (including a regulation) that permits such higher maximum age in compliance with licensure requirements for child-and youth-serving facilities.
- For the **Transitional Living Program**, the age is defined as 16-21 years of age, or 22 years of age if previously in care under certain circumstances.

In addition, the **Basic Center Program** serves:
- Runaway Youth: An individual who is less than 18 years of age and who absents himself or herself from home or a place of legal residence without the permission of a parent or legal guardian, and
- Youth at Risk of Separation from the Family: An individual— (A) who is less than 18 years of age; and (B) (i) who has a history of running away from the family of such individual; (ii) whose parent, guardian, or custodian is not willing to provide for the basic needs of such individual; or (iii) who is at risk of entering the child welfare system or juvenile justice system as a result of the lack of services available to the family to meet such needs.

The **Street Outreach Program** also uses the following definition of 'street youth': An individual who— (A) is— (i) a runaway youth; or (ii) indefinitely or intermittently a homeless youth; and (B) spends a significant amount of time

on the street or in other areas that increase the risk to such youth for sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, prostitution, or drug abuse.

Public Health Services Act

Section 254(b) of the Public Health Services Act established requirements for health centers. Part of these requirements include serving people experiencing homelessness, who meet the following definitions:

Homeless individual: The term "homeless individual" means an individual who lacks housing (without regard to whether the individual is a member of a family), including an individual whose primary residence during the night is a supervised public or private facility that provides temporary living accommodations and an individual who is a resident in transitional housing.

The Act allows health centers to continue providing care to formerly homeless individuals in permanent housing for up to 12 additional months.