



Center for Social Development

GEORGE WARREN BROWN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



Washington University in St. Louis



Grand Challenge to End Homelessness

Co-Leads: Benjamin F. Henwood & Deborah K. Padgett

Policy Conference for the Grand Challenges for Social Work
September 15, 2016



Conditions and Potential for Change



- Roughly 1.5 million Americans experience homelessness annually.
- Growth in homelessness from young adults and persons over age 50.
- New paradigm
 - Prioritize housing over shelters
 - Value client choice and direction
 - Match flexible support services to actual need
- Incurred tax expenditures >\$160 billion annually to support homeownership for higher-income households.



Policy Recommendations



- Expand access to housing and housing subsidies (e.g. housing choice vouchers, short-term subsidies) through HUD, CMS, child welfare, criminal justice, etc.
- Ensure that evidence-based psychosocial interventions (e.g. housing first, CTI, supported employment, etc.) accompany housing assistance
- Develop and evaluate housing-led and psychosocial interventions for specific populations (e.g. homeless youth, unaccompanied women, older adults)



Next steps



- Reduce homelessness overall (e.g. “functional zero” for homeless Veterans)
- Increase social work workforce, collaboration, and leadership on homelessness policy, practice and research
- Increase housing resources and support services
- Address upstream factors with other challenges (decarceration, youth development/foster care, etc.)
- End homelessness



Policy Recommendations



- Expand access to housing subsidies (e.g. housing choice vouchers, short-term subsidies)
 - Reduce barriers
- Ensure that evidence-based psychosocial interventions (e.g. housing first, CTI, etc.) accompany housing assistance
- Develop and evaluate housing-led and psychosocial interventions for specific populations (e.g. homeless youth, unaccompanied women, older adults)