

# U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Strategic Action Plan on Homelessness

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year, approximately one percent of the U.S. population, some 2-3 million individuals, experiences a night of homelessness that puts them in contact with a homeless assistance provider, and at least 800,000 people are homeless in the United States on any given night. The population who experiences homelessness is a heterogeneous group, and includes single individuals, families with children, and unaccompanied runaway and homeless youth. While interventions to interrupt and end homelessness may vary across groups, ending homelessness permanently requires housing combined with the types of services supported by programs operated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

HHS is the United States government's principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and supporting the delivery of essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves. As such, the delivery of treatment and services to persons experiencing homelessness is included in the activities of the Department, both in five programs specifically targeted to homeless individuals and in fourteen non-targeted, or mainstream, service delivery programs. The coordination of these services, both within the Department, as well as with our Federal partners who provide housing and complementary service programs, is a critical component of achieving the goal of preventing and ending homelessness.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has developed the *Strategic Action Plan on Homelessness* to outline a set of goals and strategies that will guide the Department's activities related to homelessness over the next several years. This strategic action plan serves as the next iteration of the strategic action plan released in 2003, *Ending Chronic Homelessness: Strategies for Action*, which outlined the Department's strategy for contributing to the Administration goal of ending chronic homelessness. The intent of this new plan is to refine the goals and strategies of the 2003 Plan to reflect the changing set of challenges and priorities four years after the development of the first plan.

- Goal 1: Prevent episodes of homelessness within the HHS clientele, including individuals and families
- Goal 2: Help eligible, homeless individuals and families receive health and social services
- Goal 3: Empower our state and community partners to improve their response to individuals and families experiencing homelessness
- Goal 4: Develop an approach to track Departmental progress in preventing, reducing, and ending homelessness for HHS clientele



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## **Strategic Action Plan Framework**

### **Goal 1: Prevent episodes of homelessness within the HHS clientele, including individuals and families**

- Strategy 1.1 Identify risk and protective factors to prevent episodes of homelessness for at-risk populations
- Strategy 1.2 Identify risk and protective factors to prevent chronic homelessness among persons who are already homeless
- Strategy 1.3 Develop, test, disseminate, and promote the use of evidence-based homelessness prevention and early intervention programs and strategies

### **Goal 2: Help eligible, homeless individuals and families receive health and social services**

- Strategy 2.1 Strengthen outreach and engagement activities
- Strategy 2.2 Improve the eligibility review process
- Strategy 2.3 Explore ways to maintain program eligibility
- Strategy 2.4 Examine the operation of HHS programs, particularly mainstream programs that serve both homeless and non-homeless persons, to improve the provision of services to persons experiencing homelessness
- Strategy 2.5 Foster coordination across HHS to address the multiple problems of individuals and families experiencing homelessness
- Strategy 2.6 Explore opportunities with federal partners to develop joint initiatives related to homelessness, including chronic homelessness and homelessness as a result of a disaster

### **Goal 3: Empower our state and community partners to improve their response to individuals and families experiencing homelessness**

- Strategy 3.1 Work with states and territories to effectively implement Homeless Policy Academy Action Plans
- Strategy 3.2 Work with governors, county officials, mayors, and tribal organizations to maintain a policy focus on homelessness, including homelessness as a result of a disaster
- Strategy 3.3 Examine options to expand flexibility in paying for services that respond to the needs of persons with multiple problems
- Strategy 3.4 Encourage states and localities to coordinate services and housing