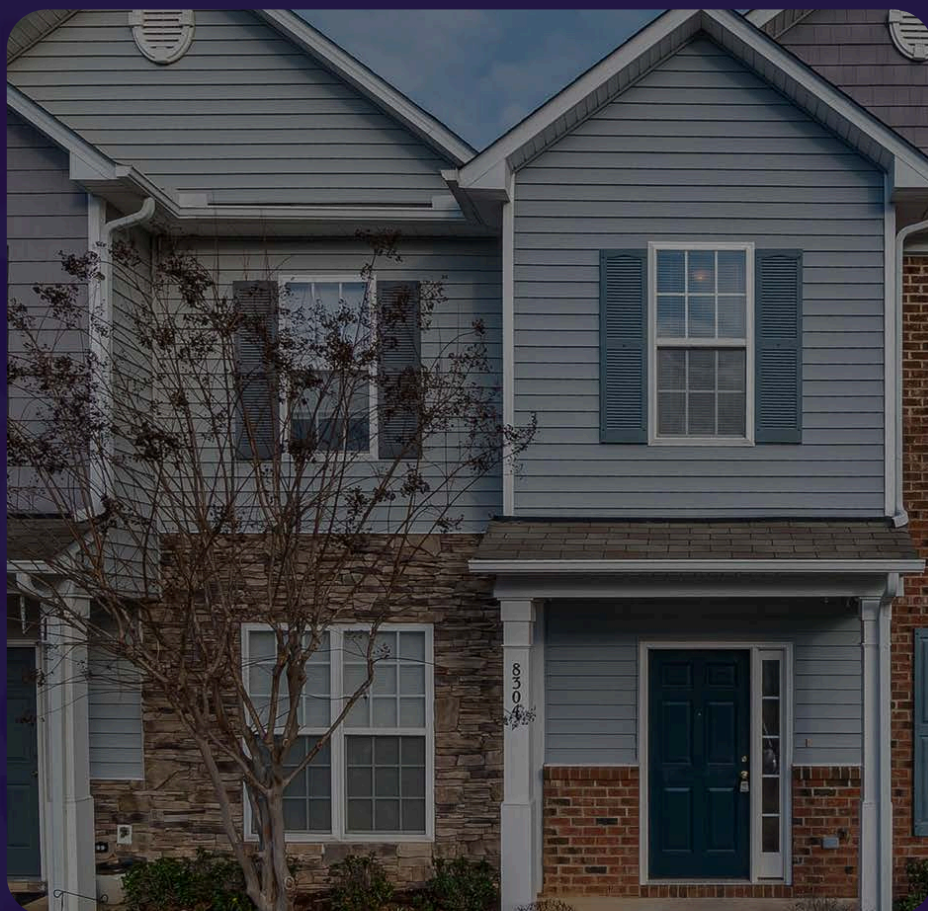




10 Point Plan for Addressing Homelessness in your City, County or State



A Call to Action from



**BRING AMERICA
HOME NOW**

A Comprehensive Grassroots Campaign
to End Homelessness in the U.S.

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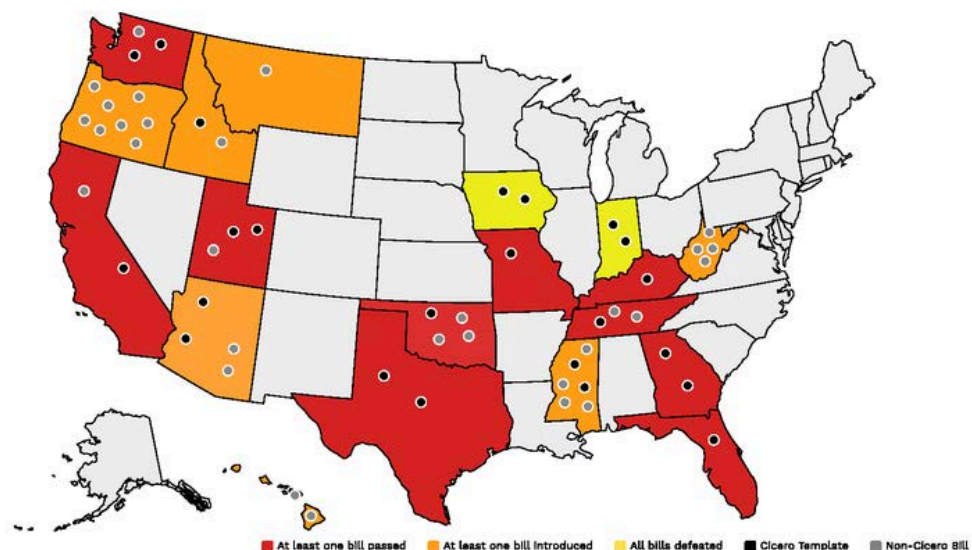
Introduction

Purpose: *The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) has created this 10 Point Model Homeless Legislation for cities; counties and states to counter what we feel is the Cicero Institute's misguided, ill-informed and mean-spirited "Reducing Street Homelessness Act Model Bill."*

The four elements of the misguided legislation focused on criminalizing poverty:

1. Statewide camping ban. Penalties of up to \$5,000 and one month in jail. Funding penalties for any jurisdiction that refuses to enforce the ban.
2. A diversion of all federal and state funding for homeless services from evidence-based housing and services (the "Housing First" approach) to short-term state-run encampments and emergency shelters. Short time limits and paternalistic programming requirements are subject to immediate removal for failure to comply, and a grant of immunity for liability to operators of encampments for all but grossly negligent conduct.
3. Lowering of due process protections to involuntarily commit people experiencing homelessness to state psychiatric institutions, paired with the threat of jail or \$5,000 fines for non-compliance with outpatient treatment.
4. Creation of "homeless outreach teams" funded by homelessness dollars. This requires law enforcement to force unhoused people into state-run encampments under threat of arrest.

To date this Cicero Institute template has passed in 10 states; and has been introduced in some form in almost 20 states. Advocates and legislators with conscience have been successful in fighting back some of the harmful legislative efforts.



Map is compiled by the Housing Not Handcuffs Campaign and is current as of March 14, 2025

The Cicero Institute's template legislation, as well as any effort to make illegal daily survival acts, or having no where else to go, is a threat to ending anyone's homelessness. This criminalization of poverty (criminalization for short) moves our communities backwards - creating barriers to housing instead of enacting proactive and proven programs that provide housing and services.

In place of putative responses to people who are forced to live outdoors, we offer this 10-Point framework for state and local communities to respond with compassion and evidence-based successful programs.

Be mindful that the recommendations below may need to be modified based on the target population and unique qualities of the jurisdiction.

10 Point Legislation Template

- 1 Affordable and Accessible Housing**
- 2 Homeless Prevention**
- 3 Decriminalization of Poverty**
- 4 Expanded Shelter & Standards**
- 5 Employment Programs**
- 6 Trauma-Informed Care**
- 7 Treatment on Demand**
- 8 Encampment Infrastructure**
- 9 Friendly Architecture**
- 10 Equity in Impact**

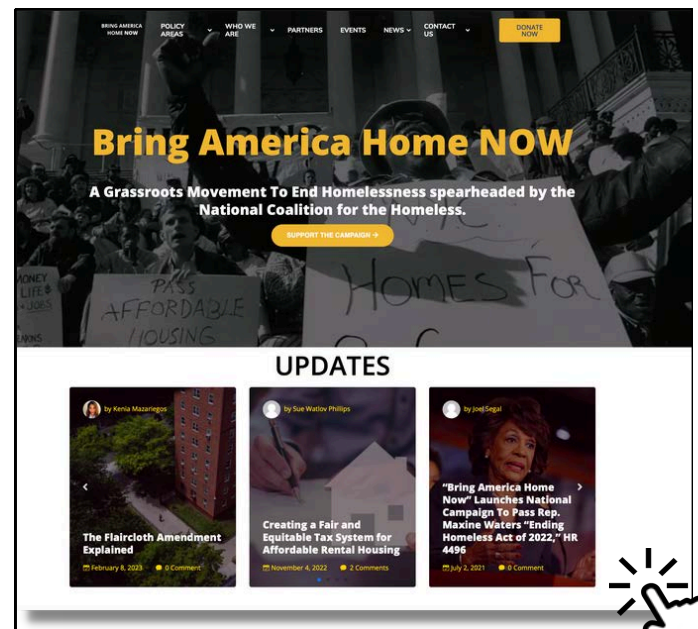
The NCH 10-Point Model Homeless Legislation template is designed to complement NCH's national **Bring America Home Now!** Campaign, which consists of six policy pillars at the national level and is a grassroots movement to end and prevent homelessness:

- Housing justice: housing is a basic human right
- Universal access to health care
- Livable wages and basic income
- Education and training
- Protecting civil and voting rights
- Recognizing homelessness as a racial justice and equity issue

NCH strongly believes that as localities and states consider the components of this template, it is imperative that people with lived experience of homelessness, mental health challenges, and substance use issues are integral to the decision-making process, program design, and policy and program implementation.

Visit the BAHN website →

www.bringamerica homenow.org



1. Affordable and Accessible Housing

Localities have to prioritize preserving and developing affordable & accessible housing

Create a dedicated Source of Revenue to Fund Affordable & Accessible Housing



→ Los Angeles

Measure A—the Affordable Housing, Homelessness Solutions, and Prevention Now measure—replaces Measure H with a half-cent sales tax that has no end date, meaning it will remain in effect indefinitely unless repealed by voters. Measure A is expected to generate \$1.2 billion annually.

→ Mayors for a Guaranteed Income

Currently, 169 mayors and 94 county officials have committed to advocating for a guaranteed income at the local, state, and federal levels; investing in narrative change efforts to highlight the lived experiences of economic insecurity; and inviting other cities to join their efforts by providing technical assistance and funding support for new pilot programs.

 mayorsforagi.org

→ Important note regarding “affordability”:

NCH feels strongly that local communities and states focus disproportionately on affordable housing that is 30%–50% of Area Median Income (AMI) to ensure affordability for people experiencing homelessness and those at risk, whose sources of income include SSI, veterans' benefits, and Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF). Failure to create housing at this level will mean that communities will never truly end or prevent homelessness.

Adaptive Reuse

Definition: Localities identify buildings that could be renovated for affordable housing, create funds to support the renovations, and hire people experiencing homelessness to work on the adaptive reuse projects—where they can then live.



Los Angeles

Fact Sheet - Adaptive Reuse Ordinance.pdf



→ https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/6725f347-7fdb-42fa-aa6e-44c37f8fa999/Fact_Sheet_-_Adaptive_Reuse_Ordinance.pdf

Adaptive Reuse Map - Housing Is a Human Right



→ http://mtap_template_adaptive-reuse_final_20230918.docx

Federal Reuse Program



Title V of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act provides nonprofit developers first access to some Federal properties to use for housing.

→ <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/title-v/>

South Carolina

Municipal Technical Assistance Program (Template)



→ <https://www.housingisahumanright.org/adaptive-reuse-map/>

2. Homeless Prevention

Model Tenant Protection Template: National Low Income Housing Coalition

Four Available Toolkits:

1. Just Cause Eviction
2. Rent Stabilization
3. Code Enforcement & Habitability Standards
4. Rental Junk Fees

Now Available:

Four New Tenant Protection Toolkits!



→ <https://nlihc.org/resource/now-available-four-new-tenant-protection-toolkits>

3. Decriminalization of Homelessness

Communities have a long history of criminalizing people experiencing homelessness. However, the recent Supreme Court decision in *Johnson v. Grants Pass* laid the groundwork for communities to dramatically increase the criminalization of people experiencing homelessness by ruling that the U.S. Constitution does not protect homeless people against cruel and unusual punishment, even when they have no choice but to sleep in public using survival gear, such as blankets or pillows.

NCH agrees with Justice Sonia Sotomayor, who, in her dissent to the *Grants Pass* decision, highlighted the devastating impact of criminalizing people who are homeless:

“Sleep is a biological necessity, not a crime. For some people, sleeping outside is their only option. The City of Grants Pass jails and fines those people for sleeping anywhere in public at any time, including in their cars, if they use as little as a blanket to keep warm or a rolled-up shirt as a pillow. For people with no access to shelter, that punishes them for being homeless. That is unconscionable and unconstitutional. Punishing people for their status is ‘cruel and unusual’ under the Eighth Amendment.”

Potential actions that local and state jurisdictions can take to avoid criminalizing people experiencing homelessness include:

- Sign a pledge to not criminalize people experiencing homelessness.
- Pass a resolution (see Los Angeles resolution below) clearly stating that the jurisdiction will not criminalize homelessness through any law enforcement agency, including city police, county sheriffs, business improvement district police, code enforcement, transit police, and private security.
- Pass a Homeless Bill of Rights, which includes equal treatment, access to services, freedom of movement, the right to vote, the right to privacy, and the protection of survival practices such as asking for money or food. The concept of a Homeless Bill of Rights was first introduced by NYC ministers on MLK Day in 1992. A decade later, Rhode Island (2012), Illinois (2013), and Connecticut (2013) passed such measures.
- Pass legislation (see MN example below) that decriminalizes homelessness.
- Repeal existing ordinances that criminalize homelessness.

By taking these steps, jurisdictions can work toward humane and effective solutions without resorting to punitive measures.



Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors: July 30, 2024, resolution in response to Supreme Court's Grants Pass decision:

“Affirm the County’s Care First approach to encampment resolution; Clarify that the County jails will not be used to hold people arrested solely due to enforcement of anti-camping ordinances, consistent with current practice regarding misdemeanors, citable offenses, and settlement agreements.”

Minnesota DRAFT State Legislature

[609.6865] LAWFUL TEMPORARY SHELTER.

(a) For the purposes of this section “public place” means property owned, leased, or controlled by a governmental unit and private property that is regularly and frequently open to or made available for use by the public in sufficient numbers to give clear notice of the property's current dedication to public use but does not include: a person's dwelling house or premises, or the place of business owned or managed by the person.

(b) It is lawful and may not be the grounds for arrest, prosecution, search, seizure, civil or criminal fine by the state or any political subdivision of the state for any individual to sleep or temporarily shelter in an outdoor public place or legally parked vehicle. Temporary shelter may include nonpermanent protection from weather elements.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the enforcement of any other criminal or civil penalty for unlawful activity.

4. Shelter Standards & Expanded Shelter Options

NCH feels strongly that as communities move to implement NCH's Shelter Standards that it is critical to create an Ombudsperson Program that can independently hold shelter providers accountable and that this program includes people with lived experience.

There are numerous examples of Ombudsman programs in hospital systems; public housing authorities and senior living facilities. See resources at the National Long-

Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center



itcombudsman.org



A. Shelter Standards include:

- Low Barrier entry
- Individual privacy
- Hygiene facilities
- Safe environment
- Health Services
- Case management
- Respectful interaction
- Community engagement

National Health Care for the Homeless Council



<http://2023-12-standards-for-shelter-based-care-iph-tornabene-huggett-v2c.pdf>

B. Fund non-congregate alternatives, including motels.

NCH defines non-congregate housing as a type of emergency shelter that provides individuals with their own private space—typically in the form of motel rooms—rather than a large communal area like a traditional congregate shelter. This approach allows for better social distancing and improved hygiene practices, particularly in situations such as a pandemic.

HOME-ARP Program Fact Sheet



<https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/CPD/documents/HOME-ARP-Noncongregate-Shelter-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

C. Fund cooling centers and warming centers based on weather conditions and always maintain clean air shelters.

These centers should not be driven by strict temperature criteria (for example, only opening if the temperature is 37 degrees for three consecutive days) but should operate as 24/7 facilities during cold and hot weather, as well as when the air quality index is unhealthy for sensitive groups or reaches unhealthy/hazardous levels.

D. Fund safe parking programs that include supportive services

See website for the National Vehicle Residency Collective for a state-by-state list as well as additional resources.

National Program List

<https://vehicleresidency.org/resources/safe-parking-programs/>

5. Employment Programs

Localities create employment programs that pay living wage and benefits that targets people experiencing homelessness.

See the National Transitional Jobs Network:

Employment Program Models for People Experiencing Homelessness

<https://nationalinitiatives.issuelab.org/resources/16921/16921.pdf>

6. Trauma-Informed Care

All departments that interact with people experiencing homelessness, including law enforcement (such as city police, sheriffs, business improvement district police, code enforcement, and transit police), should be replaced by interdisciplinary teams—including peer advocates—to conduct outreach and engagement with people experiencing homelessness.

Resource: National Health Care for the Homeless, Trauma-Informed Organizations Change Package - National Health Care for the Homeless Council



<https://nhchc.org/research/publications/trauma-informed-organizations-change-package/>

7. Treatment on Demand

NCH strongly opposes involuntary psychiatric holds or forced treatment as legislated in California's recently passed CARE Court. As Disability Rights CA states, "CARE Court is a coerced, court-ordered treatment system that strips people with mental health disabilities of their right to make their own decisions about their lives. It will do more harm because studies show forced treatment lessens the likelihood of people seeking voluntary treatment in the future."

Communities and states must expand access to behavioral health, mental health, and substance use treatment on demand which includes that treatment is voluntary including confinement.

Resource: National Health Care for the Homeless, Substance Abuse Treatment A Literature Review



→ <https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/SubstanceAbuseTreatmentLitReview.pdf>

8. Encampment Infrastructure

NCH does not support developing "sanctioned encampments" - but rather supports localities supporting encampments already in place- with electricity; bathrooms; showers; meals and supportive services, which could include support for self-governing encampments.

Western Regional Advocacy Project



→ <https://wraphome.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Sanctioned-Encampments-Position-Paper-6.16.pdf>



Community Council meeting at Dignity Village- self-governed community of formerly unhoused members in Portland, OR. Photo credit: https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/dignity_village/

9. People-Friendly Architecture

Hostile architecture is an urban-design strategy that utilizes elements of the built environment to intentionally guide or restrict behavior deemed undesirable by urban leaders. It often targets people who use or rely on public space more than others including youth, low-income people and people experiencing homelessness, who are disproportionately Black and Indigenous people. The effect is to also make the designs hostile to seniors, people with disabilities, pregnant women, and care givers for children and seniors.

Read more about NCH's analysis of hostile architecture and recommendations to support Friendly Architecture in



→ [Design Against Humanity: Examining Anti-Homeless Architecture 2023](#)).

10. Equity in Impact

It is well documented that homelessness disproportionately impacts people who belong to historically marginalized groups including Black, Latino and Indigenous people, and those in the LGBTQ and the disability communities.

Due to historical inequity, it is imperative that funding and policies prioritize these historically marginalized groups, beginning by requiring that all homeless policies, practices and program include a Equity Impact Analysis before implementation.

The Center for Racial Justice Innovation [[RacialJusticeImpactAssessment_v5.pdf](#)] has multiple examples of racial justice impact assessment tools.

A number of organizations including NCH, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the National Health Care for the Homeless Council and the National Homelessness Law Center have partnered to create this framework.

Funders Together to End Homelessness: Racial Equity Resources, Founders Together to End Homelessness



→ https://www.funderstogether.org/equity_resources

Sacramento, CA (2024) Racial Equity Resolution:

Under the Racial Equity Resolution, the City commits to:

- Prioritizing racial equity and social justice across all City operations;
- Incorporating anti-racist tenets into leadership, staffing and resource allocation;
- Concentrating efforts to support marginalized groups and close the racial equity gap; and
- Proactively adjusting policies, procedures and systems to benefit people of color and other marginalized populations.

In addition, the resolution directs the City Manager to:

- Develop impact assessment tools to evaluate budgets, policies, plans, procedures and practices through the lens of racial equity
- Apply racial equity impact assessments to identify how racial and ethnic groups may be affected by proposed actions or decisions.
- Create a racial equity plan by the end of 2026 to guide the City's efforts.
- Collaborate with community groups to develop and measure the impact of racial equity strategies.
- Provide annual updates to the Council on the progress of racial equity initiatives and the Office of Diversity & Equity.

A 10-Point Plan for Ending Homelessness Without Criminalizing Poverty

2025

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