

Responding to Your Local Homelessness Emergency

On any given night in the United States, there are about 500,000 to 600,000 people experiencing homelessness (PEH). The latest data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Point in Time survey show a 3.4% increase in unsheltered homelessness during the one-night count.



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- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT



Beyond Permanent Housing

Homelessness is not just about permanent housing. An ecosystem of support is needed alongside permanent housing to transition people from the streets into safe spaces. Policymakers at the federal, state, and local level are developing opportunities for emergency and transitional housing.

“Emergency shelter — both congregate and non-congregate—serves a temporary and life-saving role for people in crisis and should be implemented with as few barriers as possible. The key components to effective emergency shelter include culturally appropriate, gender-affirming, and specific, low-barrier access and housing-focused services aimed at rapid exits back to permanent housing.”

ALL IN: FEDERAL STRATEGIC PLAN TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS

The White House focuses on housing stability

In December, the Biden-Harris Administration announced a [Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#). The multi-faceted plan outlines tactics to reduce homelessness by 25% by 2025.

One of the focus areas is helping response systems meet the needs of unhoused and unsheltered people. To that end, the plan will, “increase the availability of and access to low-barrier, and culturally appropriate shelter, especially non-congregate shelter”.

The plan also aims to ensure the enforcement of housing equity principles to reduce the impact on traditionally marginalized communities, including Black and Indigenous peoples, veterans and LGBTQIA+ people.



States and Cities step up

Many states and cities have their own plans for helping people who are unsheltered and unhoused to find safe and secure places to live.



Oregon

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Point-in-Time survey counted at least 18,000 homeless Oregonians on one night in 2022. Within hours of taking office in 2023, Oregon Governor Tina Kotek signed an executive order declaring a homelessness emergency and announcing plans to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in the state. The order impanels a new council charged with constructing thousands of homes in the Portland area, central Oregon, and four other counties – all areas where the number of PEH grew by more than 50% between 2017 and 2022. Kotek signed a second order authorizing government agencies to prioritize reducing homelessness across the state.



Portland, OR

For the sixth time since 2015, officials in Portland extended the local housing emergency declaration in 2022. Though the overall number of PEH is ticking down, the most recent Point-in-Time count uncovered significant increases among some populations, including a 48% rise in the number of unsheltered Black people. Women and people over 55 are also increasingly unhoused. The three-year extension will expire in March 2025. The move enables the Rose City to continue to ease zoning and permitting for emergency, temporary and permanent shelters, as well as tiny house communities and other non-traditional options for PEH.



Long Beach, CA

The unhoused population of Long Beach rose 62% between 2020 to 2022, to 3,300 people. Half of PEH live on the streets or in cars and trucks. This prompted first-term mayor Rex Richardson to ask the Long Beach City Council to declare a state of emergency within the first weeks of his position. In early January, the Council did so in a unanimous vote. The declaration enables the city to expedite and streamline the review, approval and permitting for developers of new homeless shelters and interim housing units for PEH. The move also qualifies Long Beach for county, state and federal funding. The declaration expires in June 2023.



Greensboro, NC

As unseasonably cold weather approached in late 2022, the Greensboro City Council approved \$898,000 to “help protect the City’s most vulnerable populations with contracts for Winter Emergency Shelter Activities.” The funding covers hotel rooms, sheltered parking areas and pallet homes. The city had previously approved pallet homes as part of its Doorway Project, making Gate City the first municipality in NC to utilize this interim housing model, according to Michelle Kennedy, director of the Housing and Neighborhood Development Department. The first rounding of emergency housing accommodated 60 people.



Los Angeles City & County, CA

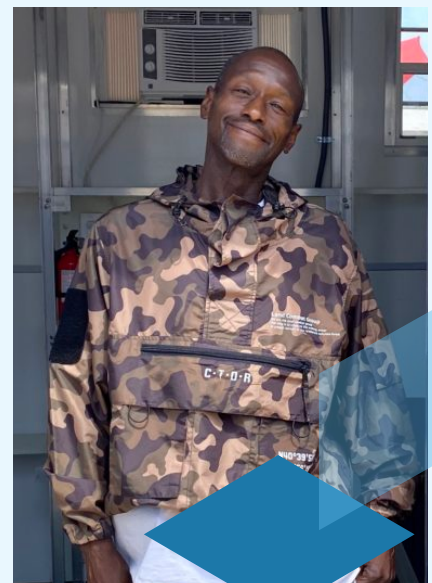
In December 2022, City of Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass declared a state of emergency over the homelessness crisis, and one month later the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors also proclaimed a local emergency, noting that almost 70,000 residents were unhoused and most of them were unsheltered. “Proclaiming a local emergency to address this critical crisis will provide the County with additional tools to accelerate and expand its response through the Homeless Initiative and in collaboration with our city partners. These additional tools include accelerated hiring of additional employees to address homelessness and mental health, the more effective and efficient use of funds, an expedited procurement of critical items, a faster and more streamlined creation of housing, expanded services, and the ability to request additional resources from the State and Federal governments.” [See how Los Angeles created 1,200 new beds.](#)

Mini Case Study: John gets back on his feet

After being unhoused for five years, [John moved into Chandler Boulevard Village](#), a Los Angeles transitional housing community run by Valley Rescue Mission. He was finally able to stabilize his life.

“The Pallet facility offered me an opportunity to just like get my head together and the beautiful part of it was that I didn’t have to get up and go to roll call,” John recalls. “It allowed me the space and the time to do it at my pace”.

The Mission’s Navigation Center connected John with a job as a forklift operator. After 6 months, John left Chandler Village and into his own place.



Activating a Strategy Now

Research shows that having a safe space improves well-being and health and overall life expectancy, boosts pathways to education and personal development and influences future employment opportunities. The benefits of ending homelessness improve the quality of life for individuals and families in addition to strengthening our cities and towns.

And yet...homelessness persists.



Housing is a human right. Yet far too many cannot afford to put a roof over their head. This is a crisis and we need smart policies to help Americans afford life's basic necessities.

VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS



Homelessness is pervasive. PEH live in almost every community – urban, rural and suburban. Lingering concerns about the economy and pressing public health issues like COVID, substance abuse and mental health will likely result in more people becoming homeless.



Many Americans live each day without safe or stable housing. Some are in emergency shelters. Others live on our streets, exposed to the threats of violence, adverse weather, disease, and so many other dangers exacerbated by homelessness. Both the COVID-19 pandemic and the reckoning our nation has faced on issues of racial justice have also exposed inequities that have been allowed to fester for far too long. At the same time, we know we can do something about it.

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN



Government data shows that more than a million American adults and a similar number of children are impacted by homelessness each year.

- 1.25 million adults experienced sheltered homelessness during 2020, the most recent year complete annual data is available.
- 1.29 million unhoused people sought medical treatment at various Health and Human Services clinics and programs in 2021.
- At least 5,800 people died while living unhoused in 2018, and 46,500 are estimated to have passed while experiencing homelessness.

Now is the time to act. The goal is to move people from encampments, cars and other areas and into supportive transitional shelter so they have a safe and secure place to rebuild. A mix of housing types provides the most comprehensive support for PEH and the most flexibility for organizations and government agencies.



Pallet can help

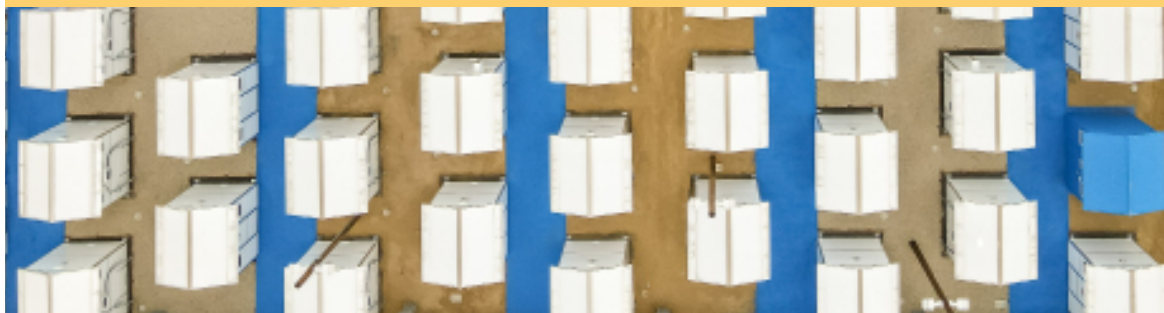
Pallet has built thousands of secure and safe transitional shelter units for PEH. Transitional shelter is critical to solving this crisis as homelessness is not just a housing problem. Our village shelter is especially important to creating affordable and safe housing for historically marginalized groups who are at particular risk.

We have extensive end-to-end expertise in the multistakeholder process required to create healing transitional shelter villages at speed and scale. We can be a resource to help you [secure funding](#), identify appropriate sites and [housing types](#), work with community stakeholders, partner with service providers and build transitional shelter. Our goal is to empower you to end homelessness in your community.

"We believe housing is a basic human right that all people are entitled to have," notes Pallet Founder and CEO Amy King. "As some politicians look to innovative plans to solve the current housing crisis, we need to work together to find comprehensive solutions to end unsheltered homelessness." Learn more about how Pallet can help you respond to your locality's homelessness emergency.



For more information about how Pallet could support your community,
[please contact the Pallet Community Development team.](#)



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