



2019 Legislative Priorities Help Texans End Homelessness

THN leads Texas communities to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. Our vision is that all communities in Texas have a coordinated response system in place to end homelessness. We work on behalf of nearly 1,000 service providers in the state who work day in and day out to end homelessness for Texans.

On any given day, there are more than **25,000 Texans** experiencing homelessness in Texas; over **1,900 are families with children**. There are over **100 children under the age of 18** that are unaccompanied. Sadly **1,935 Veterans**, many with families are also homeless. We can do better for our fellow Texans.

Although these numbers are high, they represent a **26% reduction in homelessness since 2012**. This is because Texas homeless service providers are implementing proven strategies to reduce and end homelessness. However, these programs need sufficient funding and support to continue this progress.

Strengthen Homeless Crisis Response Systems

Homeless crisis response systems, or Continuums of Care, end homelessness through the strategic development of systems based on data-driven solutions. These systems can quickly and efficiently use funding to prevent or divert households out of homelessness. Our priorities for strengthening homeless crisis response systems are:

- Increase TDHCA General Revenue funding for the Homeless Housing and Services Program (HHSP) by 15%. HHSP helps over 12,000 individuals each biennium. A 15% increase would provide assistance to nearly 14,000 people over the next two years. Without this funding, Texas may face crises like other western states that have seen a significant increase in homelessness.
Bill#: SB1 (State Agencies' budget recommendations)
- Support the development of a homeless data-sharing network. A data-sharing network will allow Texas' 11 homeless crisis systems to communicate more effectively and assist households at-risk or experiencing homelessness quickly. **Bill#: HB 3180** (relating to the establishment of a centralized homelessness crisis response system) Author: Representative Bowers (Dallas)

Other important bills to support:

- **Bill#: SB 289** (relating to natural disaster housing recovery) Author: Senator Lucio (Brownsville)

Expand Affordable, Accessible Housing Opportunities

Ending homelessness requires housing. Texas must support the development and rehabilitation of more affordable housing to end homelessness

- Secure dedicated sources of revenue for the Housing Trust Fund that is adequate to Texas' affordable housing needs. Potential sources of revenue may be doc stamp taxes such as those generated in Florida in which the tax on documents such as real estate titles is used to build affordable housing
- Allocate general revenue funding for a pilot program designed to provide renovation funds for affordable units that do not meet habitability standards as determined by HUD. **Bill#: SB 1019** (relating to the establishment funding source to rehab units for federal housing subsidy use) Author: Senator Alvarado (District 6, Harris County)



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Other important bills to support:

- **Bill#: SB 1116** (relating to insurance premium tax credits for the construction or rehabilitation of a supportive housing property) Author: Senator Lucio (Brownsville)
- **Bill#: HB 1257** (relating to the repeal of the prohibition against certain municipal or county regulation of the rental or leasing of housing accommodations.) Author: Representative Rosenthal (Houston)
- **Bill#: SB 234** (relating to the right to vacate and avoid residential lease liability following the occurrence of family violence) Author: Senator Nelson (District 12, Denton, Tarrant Counties)

Target assistance to the most vulnerable Texans

Focused assistance for persons at-risk and experiencing homelessness saves funding and contributes to stability and improves permanent housing outcomes.

- Allow Healthy Community Collaborative (HCC) grantees to leverage funding from public sources (presently only private sources are accepted) to expand access to needed supports. **Bill#: SB1 (State Agencies' budget recommendations)**
- Provide funding to diversion courts to serve 10% additional persons experiencing homelessness to divert out of the criminal justice system, expunge criminal history records when appropriate, and reintegrate back in communities to reduce recidivism.

Other important bills to support:

- **Bill#: HB 2405** (Relating to education and training for peace officers regarding trauma-informed techniques to facilitate interactions with homeless individuals) Author: Representative Bowers (Dallas)
- **Bill#: SB 538** (Relating to the issuance of a driver's license or personal identification certificate to a youth experiencing homelessness) Author: Senator Johnson (District 6, Dallas County)
- **Bill#: HB 465** (Relating to the administrative, civil, and criminal consequences, including fines, fees, and costs, imposed on persons arrested for, charged with, or convicted of certain criminal offenses) Author: Representative White (Woodville)