

Glossary of Terms

Homeless - To be homeless is to be without a permanent place to live that is fit for human habitation.

Literally Homeless - These include people who for various reasons have found it necessary to live in emergency shelters or transitional housing for some period of time. This category also includes unsheltered homeless people who sleep in places not meant for human habitation (for example: street, parks, abandoned buildings, dumpsters, subway tunnels) and who may also use shelters on an intermittent basis.

Hidden Homeless - These include people who are precariously housed and at eminent risk of becoming literally homeless. They may be doubled up with friends or relatives, or temporarily staying in a motel if they can scrape together enough money for a room.

Chronically Homeless - An unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or who has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness within the past three years. To be considered chronically homeless, person must have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation and /or in emergency shelter during that time.

Long-term Homeless - (as defined by the North Dakota Interagency Council on Homelessness) An individual or family that has been homeless (lacking a permanent place to live) for a year or more, or has had four or more episodes of homelessness in the last three years. In addition, the person or family member has a disabling condition which limits their activities of daily living. The North Dakota Interagency Council on Homelessness also recognizes individuals and families who are temporarily living doubled up and not in a position to contribute to the household, as homeless.

Supportive Housing - Subsidized housing directly tied to specific supportive services for homeless individuals or families who have come from emergency shelters or the streets. Supportive housing may be categorized as transitional (people may stay for up to 2 years) or permanent (there is no limit on the length of stay and clients abide by a lease).

Housing First - A term that has come to mean providing a chronic homeless person with direct and immediate access to housing. It reverses the traditional concept of "treatment first and then housing" to "housing first and then appropriate treatment." Housing first is a consumer driven model. It is producing successful outcomes for keeping people from returning to the streets.

10-Year Plans to End Homelessness- The idea behind ten year plans is to end "chronic homelessness." Many communities have broadened the scope of ten year plans to include homeless families and refer to ending "long-term homelessness." Proponents of the ten year planning process advocate for supportive housing, immediate housing, access to mainstream benefits, planning for outcomes, and overarching systematic change. The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) was an early advocate of ten year plans. Their model has helped raise public awareness, engage the private sector, and increase government participation in seeking solutions for homelessness. Another advocate of the ten year plan is the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), which utilizes the ten year plan model to engage local and state elected officials. While developing ten year plans the USICH has also advocated for the creation of state level Interagency Councils on homelessness. North Dakota Interagency Council on Homelessness was established in 2004.