

# States Can Reject Housing First

**During the past decade, federal homelessness policies have failed to stem the growing desperation among America's homeless, and by most metrics, it appears to have only added to their suffering.**

This is largely because federal policies are focused on the Housing First strategy. Housing First policies give individuals taxpayer-funded housing benefits without any requirements for participation in mental health, substance abuse, and other stability programs.

## THE SOLUTION

States should create pressure in key areas and leverage funding to de-emphasize Housing First programs and instead foster innovative state-level approaches to homelessness alleviation.

### Specific solutions include:

Prohibiting unauthorized camping sites and **creating designated camping sites**

Training "First Contact" personnel to **estimate behavioral health acuity**

**Expanding shelter** and transitional capacity in high-need areas

Supporting **street medicine**

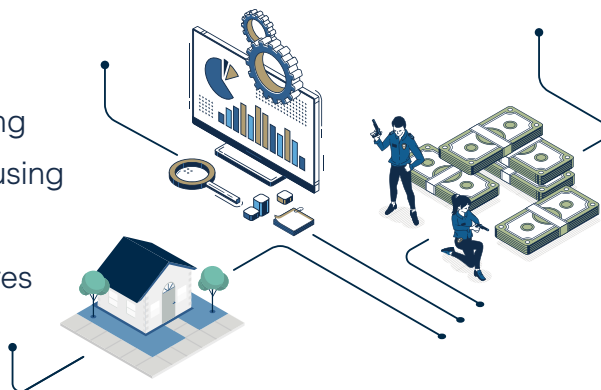
Increasing **funding for mental health treatment**

Improving **involuntary civil commitment procedures**

Utilizing **homeless diversion programs** to mandate shelter and treatment

### States should also:

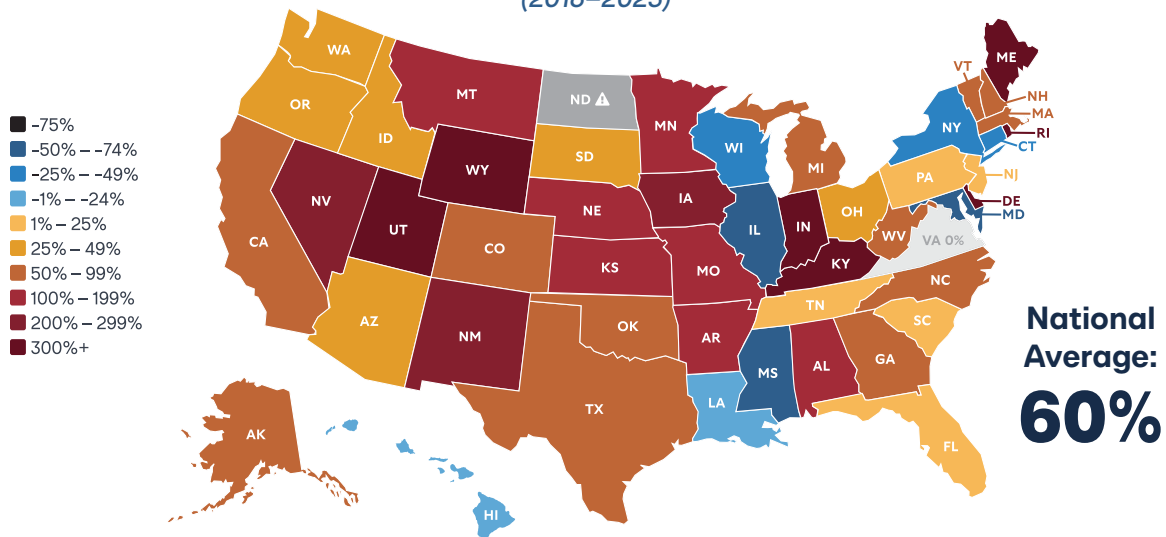
- ✓ Expand and improve short-term housing
- ✓ Create accountability for long-term housing
- ✓ Respond to crime
- ✓ Improve data and performance measures



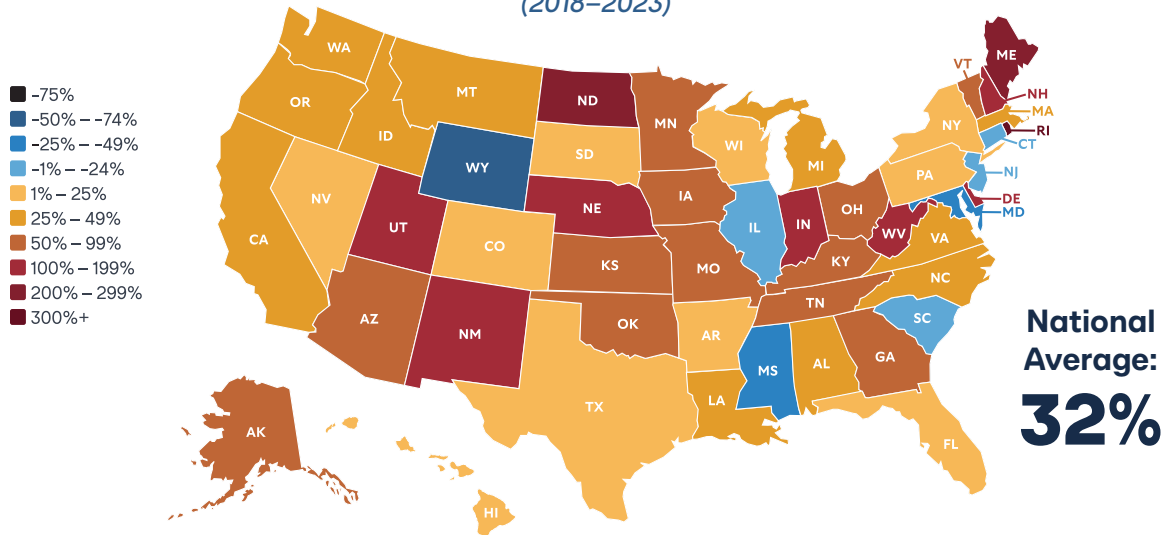
## WHY IT MATTERS

Two decades of failed Housing First models have plunged our communities and homeless residents deeper into despair.

### Increase in Chronic Unsheltered Homeless (2018–2023)



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## THE BOTTOM LINE:

States must reassert their autonomy over homelessness policies and incentivize communities to reject Housing First in favor of programs that have long-term benefits that help individuals rebuild their lives.