

Improving the Availability of Homelessness Data

Homeless service providers are notoriously opaque about providing important data about their services and impacts. Most decision makers, such as city council members, mayors, and state legislators, do not know what is, or isn't, working or why.

THE SOLUTION

Create Data Reporting Requirements for Homeless Service Providers

Programs that serve homeless people should be required to provide basic information to the public and decision-makers about their activities. Because homeless service facilities engage with people who are often living on the streets, they should serve as a conduit to maintain public safety.



They should also indicate whether the number of homeless individuals who utilize their programs is increasing or decreasing on a regular basis.

WHY IT MATTERS

Homeless encampments cause significant impacts on communities, such as encroaching on rights of way, causing fires, and collecting trash, waste, and debris. They also have high rates of serious public and mental health issues, addictions, and criminal activity. Organizations that serve this population should be required to report basic data on their successes to ensure funding is truly helping this vulnerable population.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Government-funded service providers should be required to report data to their grant issuers and to the local community on the changing dynamics of homelessness so that the most effective solutions can be prioritized.