

How does United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) advise jurisdictions to address the presence of encampments?

1. Preparation and Adequate Time for Planning and Implementation: Action plans for creating and providing housing solutions for people living in encampments should ensure that there is adequate time for strategizing, collaboration, outreach, engagement, and the identification of meaningful housing options. Adequate time is essential to achieve the primary objective of meeting the needs of each person and assisting them to end their homelessness.

2. Collaboration across Sectors and Systems: Action plans should include collaboration between a cross-section of public and private agencies, neighbors, business owners, and governmental entities, based upon where the encampment is located. The action plan should feature strong communication among a broad range of community service providers and managers of the permanent housing resources that are being utilized in order to maximize efficiency, align resources, and address system gaps.

3. Performance of Intensive and Persistent Outreach and Engagement: Action plans should involve agencies that have strong outreach experience and demonstrated skills in engaging vulnerable and unsheltered people. Effective outreach is essential for effectively connecting people with coordinated assessment systems, resources, and housing options.

4. Provision of Low-Barrier Pathways to Permanent Housing: Action plans should focus on providing people with clear, low-barrier pathways for accessing and attaining permanent housing opportunities and should not focus on relocating people to other encampment settings.

What does the Focus Strategies Report say about our homeless crisis response?

"In a homeless crisis response system, all of the parts of the system work together toward a common goal. Every actor in the system, regardless of the role they play, views each person who is literally homeless as someone with a housing need that can be addressed within 30 days. There are no people who are not "housing ready." When a person becomes homeless, a system is in place to determine where they can live and provide the appropriate amount of assistance to help them re-enter housing. The system does not make assumptions about what services people need in order to sustain housing, but uses data to understand who is returning to homelessness and why. If patterns emerge, these are analyzed and adjustments are made accordingly."