“Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?” Isaiah 58:7
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Overview

“I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me. Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” Matthew 25:35, 40

NATIONAL STATISTICS¹

- There are 610,042 people experiencing homelessness on any given night in the United States.
- Of that number, 222,197 are people in families, and 387,845 are individuals
- About 18 percent of the homeless population – 109,132 – are considered “chronically homeless,”
- About 9 percent of homeless adults – 57,849 - are veterans

LOCAL STATISTICS

On any given night, as many as 27,000 individuals and families experience homelessness in Arizona². While the causes leading to homelessness are diverse and complex, one thing remains constant among those experiencing it – they are without a home and they are suffering. We at the Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness do not accept this as a permanent condition for anyone. We believe that no one should be homeless and are committed to solutions that end homelessness for all members of our communities.

To solve homelessness requires an understanding of factors that contribute to this complex problem and the trends that perpetuate the problem in our society. Poverty, domestic violence, chronic health problems, mental health issues, and substance abuse are commonly attributed as driving factors causing an individual or family to become homeless. While people experiencing homelessness struggle with these and other problems, the primary reason that people become and remain homeless is a lack of safe and stable housing that they can afford. Affordable housing is scarce in our communities. The need for affordable housing far exceeds the supply, especially for those individuals and families with extremely low incomes.

Lack of support systems, both natural and structured, is another reason why many become and remain homeless. Family, friends, loved ones and access to systems of care and assistance are critical resources for all of us in daily life. When these systems are lacking, our most vulnerable community members struggle to navigate the challenges of daily life.

Solutions

PREVENTION
Often times, a little bit of financial assistance can make all the difference between finding or keeping a stable home or being forced to live in a shelter or on the streets. This is the intent of homelessness prevention efforts. Prevention programs utilize eviction prevention funds to assist households who would become homeless but for this assistance. Financial assistance may include short- and medium-term rental assistance, security deposits, utility deposits, and/or payments, and relocation for those who are at imminent risk of losing their housing.

RAPID RE-HOUSING
One of the most promising approaches to ending homelessness, especially among families with children, is rapid re-housing. This means moving families from shelter or emergency situations into housing quickly and creating stability once they are housed. Short-term financial assistance reduces the time families spend in shelter. Follow up assistance in accessing employment and mainstream services, money management, and maintaining housing helps families keep their housing. The fundamental practice wisdom of Rapid Rehousing is that when people are stably housed, everything else in their lives stabilizes.

EMERGENCY SHELTER
Located in urban areas and cities and towns throughout Arizona, emergency shelters are often the first point of assistance for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Individuals and families connect with emergency shelters in a variety of ways depending upon their location and circumstances. Community Information and Referral (www.cir.org) operates a referral system, which shares information about shelter vacancies for individuals and families who call the CONTACTS Homeless Hotline. Often emergency shelters serve a specific segment of the population such as single adults or families with children. In many communities, local law enforcement, local hospitals, behavioral health providers and other institutional service providers connect individuals and families in need of shelter with the most appropriate shelter resource. Family advocacy centers and domestic violence agencies also serve as key points of referral to emergency shelter programs.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
Transitional housing is designed to provide housing and appropriate support services to homeless individuals and families for up to 24 months to facilitate their movement to independent living. Supportive services within a transitional housing program vary depending on the individual or family and the challenges they are facing that is preventing self-sufficiency and independence. Upon entry into a transitional housing program, an assessment process is completed and the individual or family is assigned to a case manager. A case plan is created unique to each individual or family’s needs, providing a list of necessary supportive service to complete the program and transition into permanent housing.
Transitional housing programs help maintain sobriety, reunify families, and create a sense of community and safety. Services provided in most transitional housing programs are employment placement services, education and job training, childcare, transportation, financial and budget assistance, life-skills classes, and substance abuse programs.

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Permanent supportive housing is a solution to homelessness that has several critical characteristics:

- The housing is affordable – generally, households should not be required to pay any more than 30% of their adjusted monthly income towards the cost of rent and utilities;
- The housing is permanent – there are no artificial time limits for the length of stay;
- The resident has his or her own lease with ALL of the rights of residential tenancy;
- Supportive services designed to assist the resident in achieving maximum self sufficiency and recovery are provided with the housing – preferably at the resident’s voluntary option – but never as a condition for continued tenancy;

In Arizona, nearly 20% of the homeless population reported is chronically homeless, meaning they had experienced homelessness for one year or longer and have a disabling medical, mental, or addictive condition. Chronically homeless individuals are the most vulnerable, most visible of the street homeless, and the most difficult to address their needs. They are also among the highest users of emergency rooms and hospital services. They account for more than 50% of the public dollars spent on homelessness and utilize 50% of the resources, such as shelter beds and case management.

Permanent supportive housing has been shown to be a highly successful and cost effective solution to homelessness, especially chronic homelessness, throughout Arizona and across the country. It can be provided in different housing modes, including site-based developments and scattered-sites units, so long as the above fundamental principles are maintained. By providing permanent supportive housing, we can free up mainstream resources and homeless services systems to concentrate on resolving short-term crises and providing critical intervention to return individuals and families to stability.
RESTORATION OF THE STATE HOUSING TRUST FUND

Created in 1988, the State Housing Trust Fund is a state resource devoted to addressing Arizona’s housing needs. The State Housing Trust Fund is funded from the sale of unclaimed property, which is assets such as stocks, savings accounts, or real estate abandoned by the owner, often due to a death without a will. The Housing Trust Fund was initially funded by 35% of unclaimed property proceeds, and then increased to 55% to better address rural housing needs. Due to state budgetary constraints, in 2010 the Housing Trust Fund was capped at $2.5 million.

Prior to budget cuts, the Housing Trust Fund acted as a magnet for private investment, leveraged over $350 million in federal dollars annually, and helped 10,000 Arizonans each year avoid homelessness, repair dilapidated homes, and become first time homebuyers. For every $10 million investment in the State Housing Trust Fund, in addition to providing homes for families in need, it could generate $23 million in economic impact and up to 200 jobs each year\(^3\). The State Housing Trust Fund helped with:

- Homes for our most vulnerable populations: Created 250 apartments for those less fortunate including seniors, people with disabilities, and people who are experiencing homelessness
- Disaster-related housing relief: Assisted families displaced by disaster, like the Yarnell fire victims
- Rural homeownership: Helped 230 rural families become homeowners
- Homeless prevention programs: Prevented 6,000 Arizonans from experiencing homelessness
- Rural home repairs: Repaired 360 rural dilapidated homes, many occupied by the elderly
- Homeless shelters: Helped serve 3,000 people in shelters
- Tribal housing: Provided assistance for housing on Arizona’s tribal lands, many with the direst housing needs including lack of water

Please visit [www.azceh.org](http://www.azceh.org) to learn how you can support our efforts to restore the state housing trust fund so that every Arizonan has the opportunity to live in a safe and affordable place to call home.

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Debunking Myths

COMMON QUESTIONS ON HOW TO BEST ENGAGE AND SUPPORT PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Are there always going to be homeless people in our community?

First, we must change our language to help shift our mindset. Using “person first language”, which means to put the person before the descriptor, we begin that shift. Person-first language is saying “people experiencing homelessness” instead of “the homeless” or “homeless people.”

While it may seem like a lot of words to get a short point across, by using person first language you are doing more than just being politically correct. It helps to slowly chip away at deeply embedded stereotypes. When we talk about “the homeless,” it’s easy to have an “us versus them” mindset. Such language fosters the belief that “they” are different from “us.” But we are not different – we are all people.

When we attach labels to people, like “homeless,” we miss the fact that these individuals and families are people that are suffering. They are members of our community, who are perhaps the most vulnerable among us. They are someone’s son or daughter; perhaps a parent, or grandparent. They may be someone’s brother or sister, and may have served our country bravely in the military.

When you say “people who experience homelessness”, it reminds us that homelessness is just an experience. It’s not an inherent part of a person. The experience of homelessness is just one out of many possible experiences in the tapestry of each person’s life. No one deserves to be defined by one experience.

And, yes, there will probably always be people experiencing homelessness in our community. But, through the work of federal, state, local, public and private partnerships, we believe that we can end chronic homelessness in our community and curtail the experience for those who just became or who are at risk. On a national level, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) was created in 1987 as an independent agency within the federal executive branch. USICH partners with 19 federal agencies, state and local governments, advocates, service providers, and people experiencing homelessness to achieve the goals outlined in the first federal strategic plan to end homelessness, called Opening Doors. Opening Doors is the nation’s first comprehensive strategy to prevent and end homelessness. Opening Doors serves as a roadmap for joint action amongst the federal, state, and local agencies committed to an end to homelessness. We can, will, and must end homelessness in Arizona.

Is it safe to talk to a person experiencing homelessness?

Each person has a different situation and attitude about their circumstance, often affecting their willingness to talk. If the person appears approachable, use eye contact and speak to him or her with respect. Maintain safe boundaries as you would with any first engagement, and do not provide your personal contact information or engage with someone who appears upset, hostile, or dangerous.
Should I give money to someone who appears homeless on the streets/freeway off-ramp/sidewalk? Are they "faking" it or just going to use my money to buy drugs and alcohol?

Every day many of us see a person experiencing homelessness holding a sign or a cup begging for money. Without having a conversation with them, we make assumptions about how they got to where they are. Drug addicts. Alcoholics. Uneducated people who failed to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Scam artists who choose not to bathe so they can live a life of luxury based on the quarters they collect every day. We employ whatever judgment we can conjure up to help us reduce their humanity to the point that they become invisible.

Or the kind-hearted people among us often give spare change or a dollar to a homeless person. However, we may ask ourselves, "Will a dollar make a difference in the life we've just touched?"

Yes, a financial gift of any amount does make a difference -- a number of differences, in fact. With our contribution, the person experiencing homelessness may be able to accumulate enough money to purchase the basic necessities of life -- food, clothing and shelter. Further, by reaching out to that individual, we show that we care, which uplifts his or her spirits. And our generosity expands our own feelings of compassion, which positively affects our immune system.

So the answer to give is a personal choice. But if you decide to give, give freely. With no strings attached. If you choose to give, it is the recipient's responsibility to be responsible with the gift received. If they make other choices, you still did the right thing.

Consider buying a sandwich, meal, or cup of coffee for the person with the “Hungry” sign. You might also decide to carry around fast food gift cards, hygiene kits, snacks, water bottles, bus tokens or new socks in case you encounter someone in need. And if you still have reservations or want to make a donation that contributes to the systemic end of homelessness, give money to homeless charities, and support political candidates who are committed to looking out for the poor. Visit www.azceh.org and make a donation or consider donating your time by visiting www.azceh.org/service-opportunities.

"Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakat; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.” Surat Al-Baqarah 2:177
Advocacy

**FAITH-BASED**

Working to end homelessness is a great way for the faith communities to engage their members into action to make their local community a better, more livable place and to work towards a common goal. Faith groups can educate the public and encourage people to get involved and take action. Consider the following:

- Dedicate sermons and host discussions on homelessness. Ask questions that lead to deeper discussions:
  - How do we define what we need, want, and can do without?
  - How do we treat those without income or without a home as equals?
  - What is the difference between a house and a home? How do relationships, friendships, congregations, and our community contribute to the idea of “home”?
  - How does our faith call us to respond to those in need?

- Educate families on the importance of savings.

Develop programs that encourage saving on a regular basis, even partnerships with financial institutions that make regular saving easy. Discuss the importance and benefits of homeownership, teaching and reinforcing the basic lessons that financial stewardship develops necessary tools for successfully reaching housing goals.

- Strike up a conversation

If serving meals is a program or outreach activity at your place of worship, consider the fact that it’s not just the food that is important but also the company. Sit down and talk with the patrons you serve. Don’t use this as an opportunity to proselytize or “offer to save” the person. Learn their story and develop a rapport. By building trust, you can then offer to discuss how your faith is important to you and what resources and services in your community may be a good resource to them.
Show the community that people care about those who die on our streets. Make a public statement that people who are homeless are cherished as neighbors. Visit www.nationalhomeless.org/projects/memorial or www.azceh.org to find out when this annual event will be held in our community. Ever since 1990, on or near the first day of winter and the longest night of the year, events across the nation are held to bring attention to the tragedy of homelessness and to remember those who have lost their lives without a roof over their heads and to re-commit to seeking an end to homelessness.

- **Incorporate homelessness into existing religious traditions**

Determine ways to incorporate the theme of homelessness into traditions you already observe. Consider serving food during Thanksgiving, a celebration of family, blessings, and food. Abstain from an everyday luxury item, like Starbucks or Friday night pizza delivery during Lent and donate that savings to those in need. Consider for example, the Jewish tradition of Sukkot, which is a remembrance of the fragile dwellings the Israelites lived in during their 40 years of travel in the desert after the Exodus from slavery in Egypt. Or Purim, the Jewish holiday that commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people from the Persian Empire. Found in the Book of Esther [Esther 9:22], “...that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, and sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor”.

- **Donate household goods to help make a house a home for people moving into new homes or apartments**

Welcome formerly homeless individuals into their new homes by donating new or used furniture items or household goods. Have your faith community gather the necessary items and donate them to your local homeless nonprofit. Learn more about where to donate by visiting: www.furnishinghopeaz.org or www.stvincentdepaul.net.
ONLINE ADVOCACY

Use your online communication avenues (Facebook, Twitter, blog, email, etc.) to educate and encourage others to take action.

- Friend, follow, like, and become a fan of your local homeless service providers. Your support means a lot and for these nonprofits, these free communication avenues are the best ways to communicate their urgent needs or to receive updates on local homelessness issues.
  

- Blog about a recent volunteer experience. By sharing your positive experience, it helps put people’s minds at ease about what it’s like to volunteer.

- Dedicate a Tweet or Facebook status update to posting statistics about homelessness and how your friends and followers can get involved.

- Challenge yourself and your friends, family, or faith community to live on minimum wage for one week, or to only spend the amount of money you’d get living on SNAPS (food stamps) and blog about your experiences.

POLITICAL ADVOCACY

Local, state and federal elected officials are more likely to focus on ending homelessness if they understand how it affects people and programs in the area they represent. The more they hear from constituents about how programs are preventing and ending homelessness, the more likely they are to act. It’s up to us to convince our elected officials to take action!

The cornerstone of successful advocacy is building relationships with policymakers, such as calling, writing, and meeting with them, or inviting them to visit a local homeless program or shelter.

Most advocacy issues are time-sensitive. When help is needed, timely action from supporters like you is critical. Join the Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness’ mailing list to stay informed as advocacy issues arise. We collaborate with local and national partners to garner support to put an end to homelessness in Arizona. Visit www.azceh.org and click on ‘subscribe to our newsletter’ ‘donate’ or ‘become a member’ to stay involved and informed.
35 Ways Your Faith Community Can Help Today⁴

The world of the homeless seems very far from yours -- but in some ways it is quite near. For any of us, the loss of a job, the death of a spouse or a child or a severe physical disability could lead us down the path to total despair. These are the very tragedies that have happened to many individuals experiencing homelessness. Struck by personal tragedies, the people in shelters across America, have lost their homes and been deserted by the families and friends they once had. What can you do to help them? Sometimes the smallest can go a long way.

(Compilation reprinted from JustGive.org)

1. **Understand who the homeless are** - Help dispel the stereotypes about the homeless. Learn about the different reasons for homelessness, and remember, every situation is unique.

2. **Educate yourself about the homeless** - A homeless person may be someone who lost their job, a runaway child, or someone with a mental illness. One of the first steps in helping people is to see them as individuals and to find out what they need. Notice them; talk to them. Most are starved for attention.

3. **Respect the homeless as individuals** - Give the homeless people the same courtesy and respect you would accord your friends, your family, your employer. Treat them as you would wish to be treated if you needed assistance.

4. **Respond with kindness** - We can make quite a difference in the lives of the homeless when we respond to them, rather than ignore or dismiss them. Try a kind word and a smile.

5. **Develop lists of shelters** - Carry a card that lists local shelters so you can hand them out to the homeless. You can find shelters in your phone book.

6. **Buy Street Sheet** - This biweekly newspaper is sold in almost every major American city and is intended to help the homeless help themselves. For every paper sold, the homeless earn five cents deposited in a special savings account earmarked for rent.

7. **Bring food** - It's as simple as taking a few extra sandwiches when you go out. When you pass someone who asks for change, offer him or her something to eat. If you take a lunch, pack a little extra. When you eat at a restaurant, order something to take with you when you leave.

8. **Give money** - One of the most direct ways to aid the homeless is to give money. Donations to nonprofit organizations that serve the homeless go a long way.

9. **Give recyclables** - In localities where there is a "bottle law," collecting recyclable cans and bottles is often the only "job" available to the homeless. But it is an honest job that requires initiative. You can help by saving your recyclable bottles, cans, and newspapers and giving them to the homeless instead of taking them to a recycling center or leaving them out for collection. If you live in a larger city, you may wish to leave your recyclables outside for the homeless to pick up -- or give a bagful of

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⁴ Reprinted from JustGive.org, www.justgive.org/donations/help-homeless.jsp
cans to a homeless person in your neighborhood.

10. **Donate clothing** - Next time you do your spring or fall cleaning, keep an eye out for those clothes that you no longer wear. If these items are in good shape, gather them together and donate them to organizations that provide housing for the homeless.

11. **Donate a bag of groceries** - Load up a bag full of nonperishable groceries, and donate it to a food drive in your area. If your community doesn’t have a food drive, organize one. Contact your local soup kitchens, shelters, and homeless societies and ask what kind of food donations they would like.

12. **Donate toys** - Children living in shelters have few possessions -- if any -- including toys. Homeless parents have more urgent demands on what little money they have, such as food and clothing. So often these children have nothing to play with and little to occupy their time. You can donate toys, books, and games to family shelters to distribute to homeless children. For Christmas or Chanukah, ask your friends and co-workers to buy and wrap gifts for homeless children.

13. **Volunteer at a shelter** - Shelters thrive on the work of volunteers, from those who sign people in, to those who serve meals, to others who counsel the homeless on where to get social services. For the homeless, a shelter can be as little as a place to sleep out of the rain or as much as a step forward to self-sufficiency.

14. **Volunteer at a soup kitchen** - Soup kitchens provide one of the basics of life, nourishing meals for the homeless and other disadvantaged members of the community. Volunteers generally do much of the work, including picking up donations of food, preparing meals, serving it, and cleaning up afterward. To volunteer your services, contact your local soup kitchen, mobile food program, shelter, or religious center.

15. **Volunteer your professional services** - No matter what you do for a living, you can help the homeless with your on-the-job talents and skills. Those with clerical skills can train those with little skills. Doctors, psychiatrists, counselors, and dentists can treat the homeless in clinics. Lawyers can help with legal concerns. The homeless’ needs are bountiful -- your time and talent won’t be wasted.

16. **Volunteer your hobbies** - Every one of us has something we can give the homeless. Wherever our interests may lie -- cooking, repairing, gardening, and photography -- we can use them for the homeless. Through our hobbies, we can teach them useful skills, introduce them to new avocations and perhaps point them in a new direction.

17. **Volunteer for follow-up programs** - Some homeless people, particularly those who have been on the street for a while, may need help with fundamental tasks such as paying bills, balancing a household budget, or cleaning. Follow-up programs to give the formerly homeless further advice, counseling, and other services need volunteers.

18. **Tutor homeless children** - A tutor can make all the difference. Just having adult attention can spur
children to do their best. Many programs exist in shelters, transitional housing programs, and schools that require interested volunteers. Or begin your own tutor volunteer corps at your local shelter. It takes nothing more than a little time.

19. **Take homeless children on trips** - Frequently, the only environment a homeless child knows is that of the street, shelters, or other transitory housing. Outside of school -- if they attend -- these children have little exposure to many of the simple pleasures that most kids have. Volunteer at your local family shelter to take children skating or to an aquarium on the weekend.

20. **Volunteer at battered women’s shelter** - Most battered women are involved in relationships with abusive husbands or other family members. Lacking resources and afraid of being found by their abusers, many may have no recourse other than a shelter or life on the streets once they leave home. Volunteers handle shelter hotlines, pick up abused women and their children when they call, keep house, and offer counseling. Call your local shelter for battered women to see how you can help.

21. **Teach about the homeless** - If you do volunteer work with the homeless, you can become an enthusiast and extend your enthusiasm to others. You can infect others with your own sense of devotion by writing letters to the editor of your local paper and by pressing housing issues at election time.

22. **Publish shelter information** - Despite all of our efforts to spread the word about shelters, it is surprising how many people are unaware of their own local shelters. Contact your local newspapers, church or synagogue bulletins, or civic group’s newsletters about the possibility of running a weekly or monthly listing of area services available to the homeless. This could include each organization’s particular needs for volunteers, food, and other donations.

23. **Educate your children about the homeless** - Help your children to see the homeless as people. If you do volunteer work, take your sons and daughters along so they can meet with homeless people and see what can be done to help them. Volunteer as a family in a soup kitchen or shelter. Suggest that they sort through the toys, books, and clothes they no longer use and donate them to organizations that assist the poor.

24. **Sign up your company/school** - Ask your company or school to host fund-raising events, such as raffles or craft sales and donate the proceeds to nonprofit organizations that aid the homeless. You can also ask your company or school to match whatever funds you and your co-workers or friends can raise to help the homeless.

25. **Recruit local business** - One of the easiest ways to involve local businesses is to organize food and/or clothing drives. Contact local organizations to find out what is needed, approach local grocery or clothing shops about setting up containers on their premises in which people can drop off donations, ask local businesses to donate goods to the drive, and publicize the drive by placing announcements in local papers and on community bulletin boards and by posting signs and posters around your neighborhood.
26. **Create lists of needed donations** - Call all the organizations in your community that aid the homeless and ask them what supplies they need on a regular basis. Make a list for each organization, along with its address, telephone number, and the name of a contact person. Then mail these lists to community organizations that may wish to help with donations -- every place from religious centers to children's organizations such as Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts.

27. **Play with children in a shelter** - Many children in shelters are cut off from others their own age. Shuffled from place to place, sometimes these kids don’t attend school on a regular basis, and have no contact with other kids. Bring a little joy to their lives by taking your children to a local shelter to play. Plan activities such as coloring, playing with dolls, or building model cars (take along whatever toys you’ll need). Your own children will benefit too.

28. **Employ the homeless** - *Help Wanted - General Office Work. Welfare recipient, parolee, ex-addict OK. Good salary, benefits. Will train.* That’s the way Wildcat Service Corporations Supported Work Program invites the "unemployable" to learn to work and the program works! More than half the people who sign on find permanent, well-paying jobs, often in maintenance, construction, clerical, or security work.

29. **Help the homeless apply for aid** - Governmental aid is available for homeless people, but many may not know where to find it or how to apply. Since they don’t have a mailing address, governmental agencies may not be able to reach them. You can help by directing the homeless to intermediaries, such as homeless organizations, that let them know what aid is available and help them to apply for it. If you want to be an advocate or intermediary for the homeless yourself, you can contact these organizations as well.

30. **Stand up for the civil rights of the homeless** - In recent elections, for example, volunteers at shelters and elsewhere helped homeless people register to vote . . . even though they had "no fixed address" at the moment. Some officials would not permit citizens without a permanent address to vote.

31. **Join Habitat for Humanity** - This Christian housing ministry builds houses for families in danger of becoming homeless. Volunteers from the community and Habitat homeowners erect the houses. Funding is through donations from churches, corporations, foundations, and individuals.

32. **Form a transitional housing program** - One of the most potent homeless-prevention services a community can offer residents who are in danger of eviction is a transitional housing program. These programs help people hang on to their current residences or assist them in finding more affordable ones. The methods include steering people to appropriate social service and community agencies, helping them move out of shelters, and providing funds for rent, mortgage payments, and utilities. For information, contact the Homelessness Information Exchange at (202) 462-7551.

33. **Write to corporations** - Some of the largest corporations in America have joined the battle for low-income housing. Through the use of the tax credit or by outright grants, they are participating with federal and state government, not-for-profit and community-based groups to build
desperately needed housing in Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and dozens of other cities. Contact various organizations and ask them what they are doing.

34. **Contact your government representatives** - Our legislators rarely receive more than three visits or ten letters about any subject. When the numbers exceed that amount, they sit up and take note. Personal visits are the most potent. Letters are next; telephone calls are third best. Housing issues don’t come up that often, so your public officials will listen.

35. **Push for state homelessness prevention programs** - While states routinely supply aid for the poor and homeless, many do not have programs provide funds and other services to those who will lose their homes in the immediate future unless something is done. Homelessness comes at great financial and human cost to the families who are evicted or foreclosed.