



# Addressing Homelessness in the States

## THE PROBLEM

### Street homelessness is worse today than at any point in recent history.

According to annual point-in-time count data, the number of unsheltered individuals increased by more than 30 percent in less than ten years.<sup>1</sup> This crisis has left America's once great urban centers dangerous shells of what they once were.

Effective solutions must address the public safety and mental health aspects of homelessness. The San Diego County DA's office found that homeless individuals were **514 times more likely to commit a crime** than the average citizen, and in 98 percent of cases, a homeless offender is a repeat offender.<sup>2</sup>



The largest study of American homelessness found that **more than 80 percent of homeless individuals suffered from mental illness**, and only four percent cited housing costs as the primary reason they became homeless.

The same study reported **two-thirds of homeless people admitted to regularly using hard narcotics** like methamphetamine, crack cocaine, and opiates, with less than half reporting ever receiving treatment.<sup>3</sup>



The conventional response to homelessness by federal, state, and local governments and their non-profit partners ignore these harsh realities, insisting that homelessness can be solved by simply building and giving away enough free housing for every homeless individual.

## SOLUTIONS

**Homelessness is a complex issue that requires solutions to address its root causes with a focus on accountability and outcomes—not handouts.**

Service organizations that accept public dollars **must show results** that justify their funding.

Cities that sit idly by as the public safety of their streets worsens **must be held accountable** for their inaction.

And state governments can support this effort by **holding individuals and institutions accountable** for their success.



## WHY IT MATTERS

**Increasing homelessness has left the public feeling increasingly unsafe.** They see effective interventions like recovery programs and temporary shelters as central to the solution.<sup>4</sup>

## THE BOTTOM LINE

**Data collection, outcomes measurement, transparency, and accountability will help turn broken institutions into effective agents of change that can improve the well-being of the most vulnerable people among us while restoring communities.**

1. <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness/>
2. <https://kogo.iheart.com/featured/the-demaio-report/content/2022-03-29-new-data-reveals-link-between-homelessness-and-crime-wave-in-california/>
3. [https://homelessness.ucsf.edu/sites/default/files/2023-06/CASPEH\\_Report\\_62023.pdf](https://homelessness.ucsf.edu/sites/default/files/2023-06/CASPEH_Report_62023.pdf)
4. <https://ciceroinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Arizona-Homelessness-Polling-Summer-2023.pdf>