FROM AWARD WINNING DIRECTOR **COLIN K. GRAY**
WITH EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **LUCY LIU**
AND MUSIC FROM **RUN THE JEWELS**

ONE ZIP CODE
AMERICA'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS

UNZIPPED

An Autopsy of American Inequality

"*UNZIPPED* IS THE FRONTLINE
FOR AMERICA'S HOUSING DIVIDE."
VARIETY

TAKE ACTION
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Filmmakers use immersive storytelling to produce intense thoughts and emotions in the viewer. Journeys in Film uses this powerful medium as a springboard for meaningful dialogue around humanity's most pressing issues. In this guide, you will find suggestions for leading productive conversations that broaden perspectives, encourage empathy, increase global awareness, and build new paradigms for change.

- When watching a film or having a powerful discussion, normalize taking breaks and exercising bodily autonomy. Acknowledge that participants might feel vulnerable and that conversations around complex topics can be complicated and challenging. **Encourage members to voice and do what is right for them without needing to explain or apologize.**

- People do their best when they know what to expect. **Start and end your meetings on time.**

- **Share or co-create your intentions for the meeting.**

- **Create your space.** If possible, share snacks or find other ways to create an inviting, comfortable atmosphere.

- **Create a trustworthy space.** Maintain confidentiality and only speak to your own experience.

- **Minimize distractions** while you are together. Silence cell phones and devices so you can give your full attention to the conversation.

- **Practice whole-body listening.** Listen to words, tone, body language, and the feeling in the atmosphere.

- **Acknowledge voices that may be absent.** Is there a lived experience that isn't represented in your group? Who are the bridge people who might be able to connect you with other people in your community who might bring new perspectives to the table?

- **Adopt an attitude of positive intent.** If someone says something that rubs you the wrong way, assume positive intent and ask for more information.

- Remind participants to be curious and to welcome other people's views and opinions. **Listen to understand, not to respond.** You don't need to agree with others in your group or make it known that you are "right" to have a worthwhile conversation.

- **Words matter.** Be open to learning and practicing new ways to communicate with others.

- **Be clear, direct, and kind** in your communication. Nobody benefits when you bottle your opinions.

- Everyone has blind spots and biases; **cultivate a space of grace** as you enter into new territory together.

- If a conversation gets heated, practice acknowledging the tension, pausing as a group, and **taking a collective breath together** before diving back in or taking a longer break to reset.

- Privilege your relationships with others over the content or agenda of the meeting. **Show each other kindness.**

- **Create a closing ritual** that celebrates the time you've spent together and either gives closure or gives members something to think about before your next meeting.

"Housing is a human right. There can be no fairness or justice in a society in which some live in homelessness, or in the shadow of that risk, while others cannot even imagine it."

— Jordan Flaherty

UNZIPPED: An Autopsy of American Inequality is a searing exposé of the growing affordable housing crisis in America. Told through the lens of Venice, California 90291's struggle with the housing divide, the film is a microcosm of what's unfolding across the entire United States.

Homeownership has been one of the defining features of the "American Dream." Typically, the collective imagination centers comfort, stability, and wealth-building in the concept of "home." However, homeownership has also been a tool that has widened the gap between the haves and have-nots, while also fueling racial and generational wealth disparities in America.

An autopsy is a postmortem examination that seeks to discover the cause of death or the extent of a disease. The word can bring up feelings of finality and despair; however, *UNZIPPED* does not leave viewers feeling helpless, but rather seeks to help communities come together to prescribe a cure.

Just as spring follows winter, the film provides a roadmap for understanding the root causes of the housing crisis and a compass for moving forward where individuals in the U.S. can lean into their values by championing more equitable and inclusive housing policies.

We can't fix what we can't see, but we can illuminate and solve America's housing crisis together by privileging people and communities over profit. As you share the film with your group, use the Facilitation Guidelines on the previous page to center your values, hopes, and connectedness as you utilize the film's storytelling as a tool for deeper learning and engaged action.

A LETTER FROM COLIN GRAY, DIRECTOR OF UNZIPPED: AN AUTOPSY OF AMERICAN INEQUALITY

The lack of basic shelter is a global humanitarian crisis. As of May 2023, over 1.6 billion people live in substandard housing. Over one billion people live in slums or settlements. Lack of affordable housing is also a growing American crisis. On any given night, over 550,000 American citizens are unhoused. Nationally, there is a shortage of over 7.2 million low-income housing units. For updated information, please visit the Habitat For Humanity International Advocacy page.

The reasons are staggeringly complex — rising income inequality, lack of investment in affordable housing, the generational impact of redlining and racist housing practices, a gig economy where wages aren't keeping up with soaring rents, Not In My Backyard (NIMBY) opposition to common sense housing solutions… The list goes on and on.

Complexity often makes a problem seem insurmountable. But our housing crisis is too important to ignore. It is the number one social determinant of health in our societies. Meanwhile, rising housing costs are a main driver of every major American societal problem — from income inequality, segregation, and gentrification to racial and generational wealth gaps.

This is why we embarked on a five-year journey to make *UNZIPPED.* We wanted to humanize the abstract statistics and divisive rhetoric about the affordable housing crisis and its most glaring symptom, homelessness. We decided to focus on one zip code and two families on the front lines of America's housing divide. We wanted to document the lived experience of people struggling to survive in the most prosperous country in the world, while also highlighting the heroic frontline service providers who are developing and implementing solutions.

(continued)

*But this moment of crisis is also a moment of opportunity.
Our goal is to catalyze debate and action to provide more equitable
housing solutions for every zip code in America and beyond.*

Our search took us to our own backyard: iconic Venice, California 90291. The reality we discovered on the streets when we started filming in 2018 was deeply disturbing, particularly against the backdrop of California's soaring home prices, rising rents, and the displacement that follows in places like Venice. Scenes of wealth and scenes of misery, often on the same neighborhood block, confronted us everywhere we went. The local statistics speak for themselves: one in six renters was behind on rent, and 82 percent were people of color. There were also over 1,100 unhoused citizens living on the streets in Venice. With a population of 41,000, this meant one out of 40 people in Venice was experiencing homelessness. That number increased over 10 percent annually while we filmed. Most shockingly, an average of three unhoused citizens die every day on the streets of L.A.

As we release our film around the globe, it is vital for people to realize this is not just a Venice problem, nor a Californian problem. The stories that unfold in *UNZIPPED* provide a local lens on a growing national issue and a reflection of the structural inequity that America's housing and healthcare systems are built upon. Racist systems have pushed far too many to the brink of survival.

On a personal note, I was drawn to this urgent issue for several reasons. I wanted to understand how housing went from a symbol of middle-class aspiration and stability to an engine of inequality. I was born in Michigan, grew up in Canada, and was the beneficiary of a classic middle-class upbringing. I lived in Venice, California, for almost 20 years. I'm also a new father. Yet, I am doubtful that my daughter, born in Venice, will have the same opportunities that were afforded me as a typical middle-class kid. This matters to me. Social mobility, good education, and access to affordable housing matter, whatever the circumstances of your birth. Building more diverse and equitable communities matters, whatever country or zip code you live in.

And this is why we've made *UNZIPPED*. It's not just about equal opportunity; it's about equal access to basic human living conditions. Our hope is that *UNZIPPED* can now play a part in the growing movement to enshrine housing as a human right. We look forward to you joining us on this journey and lending your voice to one of the most urgent humanitarian issues of our time.

If housing is a human right, then we must start by supporting our Indigenous communities who were displaced by the founding of this country. As Mary Lyon of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe said, "Land is part of who we are. It's a mixture of our blood, our past, our current, and our future. We carry our ancestors in us, and they're around us. As you all do."

A land acknowledgement is more than a summary of the past; it is a lens for seeing the present, and a focal point for writing the future. It involves a series of commitments for this day and those to come.

We gather on land belonging to the peoples entrusted with its stewardship since time immemorial. Please visit https://native-land.ca/ to learn their names.

Their philosophies of law and justice held frameworks of shared ownership and collective responsibility to living elders, adults, and children, as well as ancestors and future generations.

Our first commitment is to speak truth plainly.

The delegitimization of Indigenous worldviews, dehumanization of Aboriginal peoples, and attempted destruction of Native cultures, languages, and bodies through genocide are our past and present.

Our second commitment is to ensure Indigenous voices are in every conversation.

The invisibilization of Native peoples in public policy, popular culture, and spaces where decisions are made about housing, health, education, wealth, and power ends today. Present and future policy, programmatic, coalition, and communications decisions will impact Indigenous peoples. We must end the exclusion of Indigenous voices today and tomorrow.

Our final commitment is to fulfill the mandate of the #LandBack movement.

The commodification of every form of housing and every kind of land upon which that housing is found cannot erase the fact that tribal nations recognized by our federal or state government have the domestically and internationally recognized right to self-determination — a right predicated on the presence of Native lands in Native hands.

Our past, present, and future include Indigenous people. Our work must always champion Indigenous rights. The Chumash and Gabrieleno-Tongva still live and thrive in the Los Angeles area where the film is set. Wallace Cleaves is a member of the Gabrielino-Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians and leads the Tongva Taraxat Paxaavxa Conservancy that receives land grants and provides housing for Native people. *UNZIPPED* will be donating proceeds from our film to this group, along with other frontline housing organizations across America. Please research any Indigenous-led grassroots change movements and campaigns that you can support in your community.

Housing is profoundly emotional and complex. As you approach this topic and guide, perhaps with limited time, look through the questions and start with the ones that will spark the most interest in your community/students/learning group. Some questions may lead to further research and learning opportunities. Additionally, individuals may wish to explore some of the questions on their own. This guide is both a starting place and a rich resource. Dig in and discover the possibilities for further growth, engagement, and action.

We've created a Google slideshow about the History of Housing Inequality in the U.S., which you can view here: https://www.google.com/url?q=https://docs.google. com/presentation/d/1PxwAQL887DxMSwbaWeBNESYf-DEa-4VOsZP44OpJvi34/edit?usp%3Dsharing&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1685194241082121&usg=AOvVaw3iV1Zl7_rwV2E9_mbeBBcU

The slideshow is also available in PDF form on the Journeys in Film website:
journeysinfilm.org/product/unzipped-an-autopsy-of-american-inequality/

Pre-viewing Questions/Activities

If working in a group, allow individuals to write personal reflections and responses to these questions, if preferred. Open discussion is great as well. Reference the Facilitation Guidelines in order to create a safe and accepting environment for fruitful discussion.

1. What is home to you?

2. Have you ever had to move? How did it feel to change homes? What made it easier or more difficult?

3. Have you or a family member ever experienced homelessness or housing-insecurity?

4. What are your assumptions about the causes of homelessness?

5. Is housing a human right?

DRIVING QUESTION

Barriers suggest obstacles (visible or invisible) between people and affordable housing. Even if all barriers were removed, is there "enough" housing in America?

Discussion Questions

1. What do you love about your community? Is it beautiful? Is transportation to grocery stores, healthcare, or entertainment safe and easy? Do you love that your neighborhood is alive with the language, music, and delicious aromas of your culture?

2. The "American Dream" has long held homeownership as the foundation for fiscal stability. If you are a homeowner, what do you love, and what are the challenges that come with homeownership? If you are a renter, what do you appreciate about renting? If owning a home is part of your "dream" for the future, is there anything that you believe is standing in your way?

3. Are you able to work in the community you live in? Do any of your family, friends, and colleagues have to commute to work because they cannot afford to live where they work?

4. How would you characterize the conversation around the shortage of affordable housing in your family, workplace, or community (church, social club, etc.)? Is it hopeful, frustrated, or non-existent? Click here to see where your state ranks on Affordable Rental Housing.

5. What are all the visible "symptoms" of the housing crisis in America? If we think of each of those "symptoms" as a branch of a tree, what is the "root" of each of those symptoms?

6. The film highlights many different people who struggle with finding and maintaining housing. What barriers did the individuals in the film face? What other barriers exist for individuals seeking to find and maintain affordable housing?

Extension Activities

1. Using the branches-and-roots metaphor for the housing crisis, create a visual representation (draw, sketch, collage) that connects each visible symptom/branch (e.g., unhoused encampments, poverty, educational struggles) to its related root (e.g., supply/demand issues, systems that enforce generational poverty). (If necessary, use this resource on causes of homelessness as a jumping-off point for this activity.)

2. The Federal Reserve System and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) define "rent burdened" as spending more than 30 percent of income on housing, and "severely rent burdened" as spending more than 50 percent. As housing costs rise for every income level, more middle-class Americans are slipping into poverty as exorbitant housing costs leave little left over for unexpected expenses. As a group, brainstorm the "surprise" expenses that could severely impact a family's future.

3. Do you know how much you need to earn per hour to afford a basic, two-bedroom apartment in your state? Check your answer by clicking here. As a group, research affordable housing opportunities in your zip code and share what you collectively find to each of your social media networks.

4. Visit GreatSchools.org and type in your zip code to see your area's schools rated from 1–10. Choose a school and click through "Race/Ethnicity," "Low-Income Students," "Student Demographics," etc. Property taxes and school funding in the U.S. are closely linked. With your group (or on your own), see if you can find any correlation between wealthier areas, school demographics, and overall school ratings. Do the schools in your area require students to live within a specific zip code in order to attend?

5. Humans evolved to solve problems in groups. What groups in your community are already working to solve the housing crisis? What groups in your community may not be aware of the problem or are not yet working on a solution? Could they be partnered with or invited in to work on solving the issue? (Consider churches, schools, community centers, and business associations. Visit the #RaiseTheRoof Zip Code tracker to learn more about local housing services groups in your own community.)

Additional Resources

The Impacts of Building Restrictions on Housing Affordability

Health Effects of Gentrification

Barriers and Potential Solutions to the State's Affordable Housing Shortage

A 'Forgotten History' Of How The U.S. Government Segregated America

The Looming Eviction Cliff

History of Fair Housing

Interactive Redlining Map Zooms In On America's History Of Discrimination

Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America

Assessing the Severity of Rent Burden on Low-Income Families

Kornrich S., Furstenberg F. (2013). Investing in children: Changes in spending on children, 1972 to 2007. Demography, 50(1), 1–23.

Causes of Homelessness, Invisible People

Public Schools and the Property Tax: A Comparison of Education Funding Models in Three U.S. States

DRIVING QUESTION

What are the social, economic, and personal costs of housing insecurity in the United States?

The housing crisis has wide-ranging effects on all levels of society. The American economy loses nearly $2 trillion a year in lower wages and productivity due to the housing shortage.

Personal traumas, chronic stress, and untreated mental and medical illnesses deteriorate the lives of unhoused folks and families, making the situation hard to escape.

Life expectancy is significantly impacted by housing status. An unhoused person's life expectancy in the U.S. is shortened from 79 to 48 years for women, and from 73 to 51 years for men.

Whether motivated by national economics or personal stories, understanding that homelessness in the United States is the most glaring symptom of the affordable housing crisis is crucial to remedying the problem.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the impact of home on a family? How are education, employment, and safety compromised when a family's housing situation is unstable? How does the lack of affordable childcare contribute to the problem?

2. For generations, families in the U.S. have been taught that a sure way to build economic stability is through homeownership, even though opportunities for homeownership have not been equitable. Can you envision a way for families to build generational wealth that is not tied to homeownership? How does the possibility of homeownership (or not) affect you?

3. Chronic stress is known to impair cognitive ability. This stress, combined with lack of affordable housing and a lack of access to basic mental health care, can seem insurmountable. How can we support housing security for all? What are options for assisting with transitional (and then permanent) housing? Were there approaches shared in the film that seemed promising?

4. Housing insecurity directly impacts a student's ability to stay enrolled and engaged in their studies, which has long-lasting implications for their adult lives. If we owe it to the next generation to provide access to safe homes and educational opportunities, how can we shape policy to be sure to address education as well as housing?

Extension Activities

1. As a group, make a list of the ways in which homelessness impacts a community's economic and social vitality. Imagine investments and community partnerships that could challenge the current model.

2. Investigate the medical support systems available in your community. Do you have free health clinics and/or dental clinics? What about street doctors, faith-based medical systems, free access to mental health counseling? Consider the health care you personally receive and pay for within your own family budget constraints. How would your life be impacted with better access and affordability of these services?

3. Using the Unzipped Impact Hub, explore the housing situation in your town. What is the inventory of affordable housing? What does a house in your town cost to buy? How much is the average rent? How much would you have to make to live in a moderate home? Could you work a full-time, minimum-wage job and afford to live a reasonable distance from that job?

4. Using the Zip Code Tracker, explore the different kinds of housing services and organizations that are in your community, including affordable housing, renter protection, and homeless services organizations. Are you surprised to see the various kinds of services offered? Are you surprised that there aren't more?

Scan this code to find inspiring resources, opportunities to support affordable housing and homeless advocacy organizations, and ways to get involved in the movement to enshrine housing as a human right.

DRIVING QUESTIONS

When you think of the "affordable housing shortage" or "affordable housing crisis," do you believe that you, or the people you care about, have already been affected or could be affected by this shortage/crisis? Do you have unhoused people in your community? How does this affect you? If you don't feel directly affected by this issue, is it hard to give it your attention?

Discussion Questions

1. How do the terms "unhoused" and "homeless" resonate differently? Which one do you feel should be used? Why?

2. People usually find it easiest to empathize with people they identify with. If you live in a stable environment, what do you believe is different about people who are unhoused? What can you imagine about them that is "just like me"?

3. In the United States, mainstream culture prizes individualism and self-determination, and often pushes against government intervention. There is a strong "rags to riches" mythology. What were you taught about "being an American"? Is there anything in your family history that reinforces or challenges this mainstream mythology of rugged individualism?

4. Do you believe housing is a human right? Why or why not?

5. Foundational documents like the Declaration of Independence celebrate the notion that we all have a "right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." What are the core necessities of life that allow us to pursue happiness? How central is having housing and shelter to being able to be happy? If housing is the number one determinant of social health, which is deeply connected to one's "right to life," how can we prioritize it more?

6. Martin Luther King, Jr. highlighted the connection between housing and economic justice with his Poor People's Campaign in 1968. In the midst of protests against the Vietnam War, he denounced spending priorities in the United States as the nation was "spending all of this money for death and destruction, and not nearly enough money for life and constructive development." How does our nation's spending reflect our priorities and values?

7. What have you been taught or what have you absorbed (implicitly or explicitly) about wealth and poverty? Why do you think there is a wealth gap between the rich and the poor? Why do you think there is such a wealth gap between white and Black families? Did *UNZIPPED* challenge any of those beliefs?

Extension Activities

1. Complete this Mythbusting Homelessness activity. Reflect on which myths needed to be busted for you and why and where your understandings about those myths came from. Consider ways you could help others break through their myths and misconceptions about homelessness.

2. The National Low Income Housing Coalition is dedicated to achieving racially and socially equitable public policy that ensures that people with the lowest incomes have quality homes that are accessible and affordable in communities of their choice. Find your state here to LEARN, CONNECT, and ENGAGE in your community around housing accessibility.

3. Visit your local schools, colleges, or arts centers and create an opportunity for students to share art inspired by what life could look like if our housing policies represented the shared values of equity, inclusion, and belonging. How would that future be rendered in inks, oils, or pastels? Plan a local art show in April (National Fair Housing Month), in May (Affordable Housing Month), or on October 4 (World Habitat Day).

4. Learn more about the #RaiseTheRoof art campaign and express what home means to you. Post your own picture, painting, mural, or design to your own socials and tag #RaiseTheRoof and #UnzippedMovie. We'll share monthly highlights on our website gallery and across socials. Visit the Impact Hub "Express Yourself" section to find out more.

5. Share the table on page 15, but cover the myths and facts columns. First, read statements from the "myths" column and ask participants to identify which statements from the "myths" column they believe to be true, or to note if they have heard these statements represented as facts by others. After this, share the full table, showing the myths and facts columns fully (or reading them aloud).

"The U.S. likes to think of itself as one of the shining lights of human rights and social justice around the world.

And the rest of the world looks at the United States as one of the biggest perpetrators of human rights abuses against its own people.

We've seen the unhoused being treated as less than human.
Of being attacked.
Of being firebombed.

We need to think about whether this is being enabled or tolerated by the institutions of state government."

— Professor Ananya Roy / UNZIPPED

Myths	Facts
People choose to be unhoused.	Everyone's story is different, but some of the contributing factors to homelessness are: • **Structural factors** (job availability, availability of affordable housing, discrimination, access to healthcare, shifts in the economy, inflation, employment with no sick days or parental leave) • **Poverty** (lack of adequate income to provide for basic needs and account for unexpected expenses like a car repair or hospital bill or cost increases due to inflation) • **Housing** (shortage of affordable, safe housing, and discrimination to access housing) • **Systems failures** (transitions from foster care, military service, hospital discharges, people leaving incarceration, and lack of support for refugees and immigrants) • **Personal and relational trauma** (job loss, divorce, mental and physical disability, addiction, health problem, domestic abuse, house fire, car accident)
Unhoused people are lazy.	In order to survive, unhoused people must constantly search for necessities and need to be on alert and respond to the unpredictable changes in their environment. Their minds and bodies are constantly "working."
Unhoused people are addicts.	Many unhoused people do not struggle with addictions. About one-third of those dealing with homelessness also deal with addictions, whereas 16–20 percent of the U.S. population also struggles with addiction. Addiction can be both a cause and a result of homelessness. However, the longer someone is unhoused and on the street, the higher the chance that they may turn to some sort of anesthetic and that they will descend into a mental illness.
Unhoused people should just find a job.	Many employed people experience homelessness due to the expensive cost of living. For those who are unemployed, lacking a permanent address, irregular access to showers, barriers to transportation, or adequate healthcare make obtaining a job very difficult.
There are plenty of resources and programs available for people who are experiencing homelessness.	Shelters and food banks are emergency services and are ill-equipped to provide the multi-faceted support needed to help people escape cycles of poverty and homelessness. Systemic issues like the affordable housing crisis and criminalization of poverty need to be solved to help people obtain adequate housing.
Property values will decrease if we allow homeless shelters in our neighborhoods.	Homeless encampments, as opposed to homeless shelters, reduce property values. Housing prices often remain high in areas where services for the homeless are offered. The benefits to having a populace that is supported and healthy are ignored when looking narrowly at property values.

Additional Resources

How We Talk About Homelessness: Why Language Matters

The Obvious Answer to Homelessness and Why Everyone's Ignoring It

About Homelessness

Why Are People Homeless in America?

Causes of Homelessness

DRIVING QUESTION

What is the value of living in a socially, economically, and professionally inclusive community?

In *UNZIPPED,* viewers learn about Venice Beach's history as a haven for creatives and its history as an area that was once a thriving African American and Latino community. As housing prices escalate, groups who have significantly impacted the cultural identity and creative reputation of a place are often priced out of those communities and even left without shelter. The newer, gentrified communities are frequently opposed to allowing the types of housing that may mitigate the homeless problem, leaving many folks with limited options. In Venice, we see that a boiling point has been reached. Frustration, fear, and anger have grown on both sides, and one area is now called "a war zone."

"If you want to boil it down,
it's trauma meets high rent.
So the trauma is different for each person.
It could be a veteran coming home from war.
It could be a child emancipating out
of the foster care system.
Somebody being released from prison
untreated for the mental health and
substance abuse issues that landed them in jail.
And those that were hanging on
are now on the streets or in a car.

One piece of economic trauma
— a divorce, a healthcare issue, a loss of a job —
conspires enough to suddenly
when you're out of the system,
good luck getting back on.
A city like mine has to pick up the pieces
after the trauma and the high rent
have met each other on the streets."

— Mayor Eric Garcetti / UNZIPPED

Discussion Questions

1. Which people in the film did you identify with the most? Whom did you identify with the least? Were there any situations or people you found it difficult to have compassion for? Given the many challenges facing our communities right now, do you find it more difficult to maintain compassion? Are you experiencing compassion fatigue? If so, what can you do to counter this feeling?

2. Reflect on bias, stereotypes, and misjudgments about homelessness that you've had in the past. Did any of your biases shift because of the film?

3. Many unhoused people are economic refugees, meaning they suffered a job loss, medical crisis, or family emergency that upended their economic stability. How did Mayor Garcetti's summary of the crisis as "trauma meeting high rent" resonate with you? What kind of community-based social safety nets do you know of or do you think we could create to support individuals experiencing trauma? Are there any traumas mentioned by Garcetti that you feel are more deserving for support than others? Does a person's trauma matter in terms of their right to housing? Should it?

4. Do you believe there is a cultural stigma against renting versus homeownership? If so, how have you noticed prejudice in popular media, conversations with friends and family, or in your values/beliefs?

5. How did *UNZIPPED* challenge your notion of who benefits most from federal housing support? As of 2021, the federal government subsidized homeowners through the tax deductions for mortgages (approx. $195 billion annually) at a rate of four times more than is spent on public housing (approx. $47 billion annually). Why don't we subsidize renting the way we subsidize homeownership?

6. What effect does the creative class have on a location? How do artists, musicians, theaters, and subcultures create lively communities? What happens to communities when the creative class is priced out?

7. What does it say about a society when people stop painting to become Uber drivers? Do you believe "art" is "work"? Do you believe art is a sign of a healthy, robust society?

8. Can you identify creative enclaves in your community? Where do the artists, musicians, writers, entrepreneurs, skaters, tattoo artists, and makers live and work? Are they thriving in your community or migrating to other communities?

Extension Activities

1. Trace your family's housing back as far as you can. Did your grandparents own or rent? How was homeownership viewed in your family? Ask the older generation how they were able to buy a house (if they were able to). Did they save and pay cash? What barriers were there? Did another family member help them? Did they use the GI Bill?

2. Go further. Trace your family's home residency through census and land records. You can find out where and with whom your relatives lived and what occupations they held. With a bit of historical research, speculate what familial, societal, and employment factors influenced why they lived where they lived and any migration patterns.

3. Explore the economic and professional diversity in your town. In which spaces does a diverse population interact? Can you visit and support those businesses and community spaces?

4. Participate in your town's cultural diversity. Explore cultural centers, festivals, places of worship, restaurants, grocery stores, and service organizations. Try to experience the breadth of your community not as a tourist but as an invested neighbor.

DRIVING QUESTION

Do you personally believe a person should be arrested for engaging in "activities to survive"? It's easy to see who is hurt by these policies, but who benefits from them? (If necessary, research laws in your community/city/town/county/state to inform your ability to address this question.)

Discussion Questions

1. Think back to the first time you considered the possibility of becoming unhoused. What brought on the concern (parents arguing about money or seeing someone in your neighborhood)? What feelings came up for you (fear, concern, disgust)? Where did those feelings resonate in your body (constriction of the chest, sinking in the pit of the stomach)? Why do you think these emotions were so strong? Conversely, if you've never felt that becoming "homeless" or "unhoused" was possible for you, why not? What privileges or benefits contribute to your sense of security? How would you feel if that reality changed?

2. Create a mental map of your city. Is there a desirable area to live in or an "other side of the tracks" area? What assumptions are made about the people who live in certain areas?

3. Recall the last time you had a terrible night's sleep. How did that affect you/your relationships/your work the next day? How might you be affected if you were unable to sleep or rest safely? We know that when people are stressed and exhausted, their executive function (ability to understand long-term consequences, respond appropriately to situations, and regulate their emotions) is significantly impaired. What does an environment or community need for humans to thrive rather than just survive? Should everyone have the opportunity to thrive?

4. If you are a homeowner or renter, what makes you feel safe or unsafe in your home or neighborhood?

5. What concerns do you have about more housing being built in your area? What about a homeless shelter or transitional housing being built in your area?

6. "Tough on crime" candidates are able to harness concerns about safety. Can safety concerns be addressed outside of a punishment/incarceration model? If so, how? If not, why not?

7. Many cities opt out of paying for expensive social services by essentially zoning out poorer people. This includes banning sleeping on the street, restricting low-income housing projects, banning the construction of homeless shelters, and other zoning/permitting restrictions. What do you think motivates such laws? What might happen if equitable investments were made in social services across all zip codes and communities in the U.S.?

"Poverty is criminalized when state and local policy choices trap people in the criminal legal system for engaging in activities to survive, such as driving without a license, being forced to sleep outside, or being unable to pay outstanding fines and fees.

The effects are compounded by a system that takes money out of people's pockets with the imposition of money bail, fines, fees, and other costs."

— The Vera Institute of Justice

Extension Activities

1. On your own, or in pairs, discuss (a) when you've felt powerless, (b) how it made you feel, (c) what would have helped.

2. Brainstorm all the things individuals can be charged for that can be either an annoyance or can create a real hardship for you or the people you know (e.g., overdraft fees, late fees, surprise subscription renewals, car registration, parking tickets, medical bill, etc.). What thoughts or feelings come with these unexpected charges? How did you or your family members deal with it? Some people may be able to borrow money from a family member, while others might have an "impoverished network" that is vulnerable to eviction and predatory lending schemes. If you are comfortable, connect with each other to exchange knowledge and to connect around shared experiences. If you are from an affluent community and these experiences have not been on your radar, what is your responsibility to change the systems that keep others trapped in cycles of poverty? If you feel you've hit a dead end on solutions, remember: *People created these systems, so people can change them.*

3. Using your medium of choice (watercolor, oils, pastels, collage, drawing), create art that either (a) represents what home looks like to you or (b) represents a society committed to human dignity, public safety, education, and thriving, healthy communities. If you want to take this further, meet with your local law enforcement agencies and local arts communities to hear their respective visions for what a thriving community looks like. If you can find synergy between them, organize a community event that brings art and public services together to share this shared vision widely and build community buy-in.

4. In many places in the United States, individuals who have been convicted of felonies cannot vote. Additionally, criminal background checks are often used by landlords and management companies and can create barriers to housing. Research voting rights and rental practices in your community/city/state. What do these policies and practices reflect about human rights, dehumanization, and societal thoughts and beliefs about "criminals?" Consider also researching the organizations available in your local community to support individuals transitioning back into society after having served time in prison. Are services readily available? Are they easy to find and access? Are services quite limited? What are your thoughts on taxpayer support for such programs? What biases exist that could be explored to foster equity and human rights for all?

Additional Resources

Vera Institute of Justice/Free Hearts Report Highlights the Need for Community-Based Solutions to Support, Not Punish, Poor Families

The U.S. Spends Billions to Lock People Up but Very Little to Help Them Once They're Released

ACLU Campaign for Smart Justice

National Conference of State Legislatures — Felony Voting Rights (by state)

DRIVING QUESTION

What policy-based, systemic barriers impact affordable housing, homelessness, and housing insecurity? How can we transform those barriers?

In 1948, the United States signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which includes adequate housing as a component of the human right to an adequate standard of living. When families have stable, safe, and accessible homes that they can afford, they are better able to maintain employment, perform better in school, and achieve improved health and well-being.

As income inequality grows and climate change worsens, the housing shortage will continue to rise and homelessness will increase unless proactive changes are made. If community members work together, the housing crisis will become an opportunity for systemic change. As people work together to articulate collective hopes, values, and possibilities, this collaborative work can lead to new policies and actions that will transform our communities locally, nationally and globally. It is possible to envision and build a better future for all.

The decisions about
who gets to live where in America
and what kinds of housing
they'll be able to access
shape the core foundation of our society.

Building a better blueprint
that embraces racial equity and justice
holds the promise of a generational
renewal for the future of America and other
communities around the globe.

> "Housing policy is so rooted in our status as social animals,
> and so dependent on collective action,
> that there's no way to change it without first changing ourselves."
>
> — Conor Dougherty, *Golden Gates*

Discussion Questions

In the film's beginning, Valecia states, "It's inhumane to allow so many people to live in squalor conditions when there's so much wealth. It's not American."
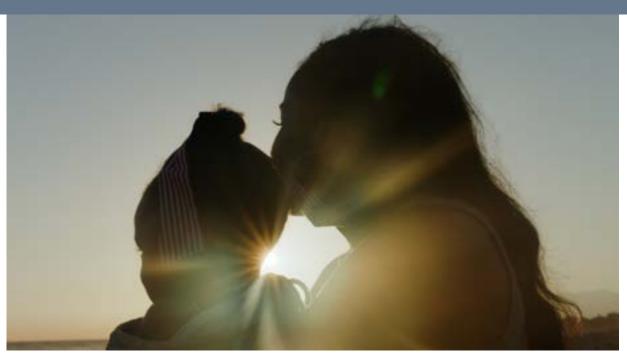
1. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, Article 25 outlines the core value of housing. It states: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care, and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control." Do you believe housing is a human right? Why or why not? If you believe it is, what does this mean in terms of taxpayer dollars and community engagement?

2. Should there be an investment in affordable housing at the federal level? If so, what might that look like? How would a community's future be impacted if all residents had a safe place to live?

3. How do you think climate change will impact housing instability in the near future? Have you seen climate impacts in your community or heard of examples from friends and family in other cities or areas?

4. What do our treatment of the unhoused and our policies regarding housing reflect about our values as a society? How do these realities reflect your values? What changes are necessary for policies to reflect your values if they currently do not?

Extension Activities

1. One of the causes of the housing shortage is uncontrolled growth without mandated affordable housing included in development plans. What is happening in your town? Read the newspaper, go to city or county council development and zoning meetings, and ask your friends about their experiences. What would you identify as prominent barriers to affordable housing in your community? (Not enough land? Local government policies? Environmental concerns? Lack of infrastructure?)

2. Working alone or in a small group, imagine you are given the opportunity to develop a new community. Spend time envisioning how you might create a community that reflects your values. What systems and services would be in place to support residents? What responsibilities would residents have to contribute to the well-being of everyone?

3. If you were suddenly housing-insecure, what resources would be available to you? Can you visit and tour the transitional housing in your town? Can you offer support to individuals living in transition?

4. Learn more about civic engagement and the various ways that you can commit to the cause. As a starting point, please visit the [Impact Hub](). There are simple calls to action you can engage with. You can learn more about the issue, engage in activities that allow you to express yourself, or become an advocate. You can also learn how to become a volunteer, donate to local housing services organizations, or get involved with regional and national housing policy initiatives. You can also find local housing services organizations by using our interactive [Zip Code Tracker]().

DRIVING QUESTION

How might you contribute to improving housing in your community, on a statewide, national, or even international level?

Discussion Questions

1. Local government, developers, and community members all play a vital part in addressing the housing crisis. How can cities and community leaders work with developers and builders to ensure that affordable housing is included in all development projects? What models can developers use to succeed financially and support diverse and equitable communities?

2. Many in the building industry say that, due to lawsuits, zoning and permitting delays, and building inefficiencies, it frequently costs more per square foot to build no-frills nonprofit apartments than it costs to build high-end for-profit condos. How do we reimagine the blueprint and streamline permitting for affordable housing projects, especially in popular transit-rich neighborhoods?

3. Many fair housing advocates believe that it is important to provide subsidies for people who can't afford current market rates. This support can come through rent control, renter protections, or the federally funded Housing Choice Voucher Program. How do you feel about programs like these? Do you have personal experience with any of these programs? Which ones are utilized in your community and what are the impacts?

4. There is often a tension between the need for new development and the fear that it will either accelerate displacement and gentrification or affect home values and elicit the NIMBY (Not in My Backyard) mindset. Brainstorm ways that communities can learn from and support concerned renters and homeowners so that both have a strong voice in housing policy. How can collaborative partnerships ensure that all stakeholders are heard and served?

5. Climate change is increasingly affecting communities across the world. What are some environmental considerations that could be addressed when constructing new housing, such as building materials, home sizes, accommodations for various family structures (like multigenerational or co-ops), passive and low-energy technologies, and shared land use? How might these considerations create sustainable and affordable housing for more people?

"Supportive housing definitely saves public money in the long term because emergency shelter, putting people in jail, having folks in the emergency room, all of those emergency services and those punishment systems are far more expensive than providing people housing and services."

— Becky Dennison, CEO of Venice Community Housing

Extension Activities

1. Investigate government spending using the resources section below. Consider how much federal and state governments spend on prisons, education, healthcare, and military. What might happen if more was spent on preventative resources to help people fill basic needs before they end up in crisis and use higher-cost emergency resources, like law enforcement, ambulances, and ER visits? [1]

2. On a collaborative space (whiteboard, chalkboard, smartboard), create an expansive list of issues the group agrees on, along with concrete ways to advocate for each. Co-create an inclusive, nonpartisan coalition in support of affordable housing for all in your community. Lastly, make a commitment to individual and group action steps along with accountability incentives to support each other.

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[1] https://usafacts.org/articles/how-much-do-states-spend-on-prisons/

Additional Resources

On income inequality
- https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/richest-1-bag-nearly-twice-much-wealth-rest-world-put-together-over-past-two-years

On Federal and State Spending (healthcare, prisons, military)
- https://www.nationalpriorities.org/budget-basics/federal-budget-101/spending/

- https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2023/jan/us-health-care-global-perspective-2022

On alternative models for third-rail issues
- https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2023/jan/us-health-care-global-perspective-2022

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

— Margaret Mead

As new housing coalitions are imagined and explored, the following is an initial list of housing solutions that are working in various communities throughout the United States and internationally. Learn more about these approaches to affordable housing and homelessness. Discuss which are already in place in your community or could be put in place to improve housing in your community.

UNZIPPED was filmed in Venice, on the western edge of Los Angeles, California. Homelessness began to dramatically increase in California as institutional and systemic policy change and public disinvestment resulted in under-building new affordable housing options, failure to protect and preserve existing affordable housing stock, and new restrictions on policies to protect California renters. We didn't reach today's crisis overnight.

Many of these evidence-based, equity-centered solutions can be found in Roadmap Home 2030. Created by housing and home-lessness experts using a comprehensive approach, Roadmap Home 2030 is a ten-year plan to create the future we want by building affordable homes, protecting low-income renters, solving homelessness, and advancing racial equity and economic inclusion.

While there is no "magic wand" or "silver bullet" solution, we know with certainty that accessible and affordable housing alongside services, care, and other forms of social and economic support move people out of homelessness and build the path to housing stability, especially for low- and extremely low-income households.

Roadmap Home 2030 provides 57 bold evidenced-based policy solutions to get and keep people housed. These Roadmap Home 2030 solutions are a blueprint that can be tailored and adopted in communities around the globe. This work is centered on two concepts: expanding access to affordable and supportive housing and keeping people housed. Both will be discussed in more detail.

Throughout California, there are only 24 affordable homes for every 100 low-income households, with a total shortfall of over 1 million affordable units. Most people whoexperience or are at risk of homelessness simply need housing they can afford — whether that's through building new subsidized housing or by providing financial assistance to help them afford rent. For the subset of unhoused people who need extra care due to disabilities, supportive housing can solve their homelessness and stabilize their health and healthcare expenses.

As rent costs have reached an all-time high throughout California and much of the nation, the challenge of keeping a roof over low- and extremely low-income households has become increasingly difficult. Strong and equitable renter protections, along with anti-displacement and rental subsidy programs, can help prevent thousands of people from losing their homes and being forced into homelessness.

As new housing coalitions and campaigns are imagined and explored, they can build on the following housing solutions that are already helping communities throughout the United States and internationally address affordable housing needs and curb homelessness. Learn more about these approaches to affordable housing and homelessness. Discuss which are already in place in your community or could be put in place to increase housing options and accessibility in your community.

- **Expanding Access to Affordable and Supportive Housing**
  Increasing the stock of affordable housing options will help virtually every household along the economic spectrum, especially if California dedicates a portion of development to low- and extremely low-income households. By stream-lining processes, removing regulatory barriers, simplifying financing options, requiring all jurisdictions to plan for and build affordable housing, and most importantly by funding more development, California can begin to increase the rate of production to meet the scale of need. To the right you will find some examples:

- Expanding tax credits and other affordable housing financing tools can create more homes that are affordable to low-income households. Virtually all affordable housing in California is financed in part with support from the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. Affordable housing developers can stretch these federal resources even further with additional investment from the state's LIHTC program, resulting in more homes affordable to lower-income households, including people experiencing homelessness.

- Streamlining the approval and permitting of affordable housing would increase the supply of affordable homes. State laws must continue to expand stream-lining of approvals and permitting for affordable housing development proposals. Without streamlining, affordable housing proposals are often subject to lengthy and onerous land-use entitlement processes that add unnecessary time and costs, and ultimately reduce the speed of affordable housing construction. Addressing the approval process would produce more homes, especially in higher-resource communities that have few affordable homes.

- Expanding permanent supportive housing would pro-tect both low-income renters and unhoused people from discrimination. Providing funding for operating subsidies and needed services would help to stabilize the lives of people experiencing homelessness, drug addiction, mental illness, and other issues so they can focus on realizing a brighter future through skill building and job training.

- Existing buildings can be repaired or retrofitted to prevent displacement of existing low-income tenants or create new residential units. Strategies like acquisi-tion-rehabilitation and adaptive reuse can address California's major housing shortage by making use of what we already have in a way that is more sustainable than new construction.

- Preserving existing affordable housing can ensure future generations will have the opportunity to remain in their communities.

  - Deed-restricted affordable housing preserves the long-term affordability of homes whose prices were reduced to below-market levels through a government or philanthropic subsidy, inclusionary zoning or affordability incentive.

- Naturally occurring affordable housing has been targeted for acquisition and conversion by for-profit entities seeking to maximize rents, leading to the displacement of low-income residents and the loss of affordability for future low-income residents. These properties can be preserved as affordable for the long-term by mission-driven, nonprofit-controlled organizations with the support and oversight of local government housing agencies.

- Community land trusts are nonprofit organizations that create permanently affordable housing for low-income residents and community benefit. They often acquire properties and retain ownership of the land or buildings while entering into a 99-year ground lease with the owner. They are an essential tool in fighting displacement and fostering racial justice.

- Expanding rental subsidies and housing vouchers can make housing costs affordable for those struggling the most. Federal Section 8 Housing Vouchers have helped families bridge the financial gap so they can keep a roof over their heads — but similar rental subsidies could be expanded through state or local resources. Similarly, the model of "rapid re-housing" often includes providing a shallow rental subsidy to help meet the gap in what a family can afford to pay for rent, helping quickly move people experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness into existing housing stock and supporting them with case management and housing retention services.

- Removing systemic barriers to housing that disproportionately impact BIPOC people is an essential step to ensuring more Californians can access stable housing. By eliminating credit restrictions and limiting background checks or other restrictions that limit people with past evictions or criminal records from securing housing, we mitigate some of the rampant discrimination that has forced people into homelessness.

- **Keep People Housed**
  Even before the pandemic, the number of Californians forced into homelessness steadily rose as property values soared, employment wages stagnated, and rental rates increased, which made it harder for people to retain their homes. Opportunistic landlords aiming to maximize their profits often used dubious means to evict lower-income households. We must balance the scales so we prioritize people over profits. Discuss how fellow renters can organize and learn more about their rights and options by considering the following ideas:

  - Expand tenant protections: Ensuring housing stability for all California tenants requires the use of rental subsidies, rent control, just-cause eviction protections, and right to counsel. All renters need to understand their rights and how to leverage them to prevent displacement.

  - Expand rental subsidies and "problem solving": The expanded use of housing vouchers and service coordination is a critical step in helping struggling renters in the midst of financial and personal hardship. Guidance with navigating the housing system can provide renters the clarity and support needed to keep a roof over their heads.

  - Improve transitions out of institutional settings: Often Californians exiting institutions like prisons, foster care, or hospitalization require additional assistance and support in securing a stable home. Case management must work in tandem with local housing navigation services to provide subsidized housing as people learn new skills, receive job training or secure stable employment.

"Ensuring that every person has a safe, stable, environmentally sustainable home is one of the most fundamental and pressing challenges we face.

It is foundational for health and prosperity. But for millions this basic need goes unmet.

Making progress on homelessness, affordable housing, and tenant protections requires accountability to deliver results through the alignment of policies, practices, and partnerships.

It also requires scaled, dedicated, and ongoing investments to produce and preserve housing and protect people with low to no income."

— Chione Lucina Muñoz Flegal

Take Action

As we lean in, show up, and speak out in support of our family members, friends, and neighbors who are struggling, we must remember the following best practices:

- Highly vulnerable populations must move into housing before services can be effective.

- Housing is independent, integrated, and not conditioned on participation in services.

- Housing is necessary for recovery.

- Anyone is ready for housing.

- Housing is a basic human need, not a reward for clinical success or a contingency for compliance.

- Engagement is key.

- Once stable in housing, clinical and social stabilization occur faster, and are more enduring.

The work to advance housing solutions that improve the lives of vulnerable people, maximize public resources, and build strong healthy communities must be done at every level of government. It is possible to solve homelessness through recurring governmental investments in housing, shelter, and supportive services that continue at scale for just over a decade.

On the federal level, find and follow national organizations such as the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), and Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) that will keep you abreast of opportunities to speak with elected and appointed officials about ways to solve home-lessness, such as:

- Advocating for the expansion of federal investments in affordable housing financing, such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC).

- Supporting the expansion of affordable housing resources in the federal budget, such as community development programs.

- Voicing support for the expansion of public housing assistance, rental subsidies and vouchers, and policies that require local jurisdictions to proactively address housing inequities.

On the state level, you can find and follow a multitude of advocacy organizations dedicated to expanding housing options and subsidies and increasing access to services and programs connecting struggling residents to much-needed support. In California, this list includes Housing California, California Housing Partnership, Housing Now,

Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE), Western Center on Law and Poverty (WCLP), and California Coalition for Rural Housing (CCRH). They can help inform you of opportunities to take action in support of unhoused people, such as:

- Voicing support for the expansion of state investments in affordable and supportive housing.

- Supporting state-level investments in rental subsidies.

- Expanding access to medical and behavioral healthcare and supportive services.

- Supporting expanded tenant protections.

- Supporting streamlining of affordable and supportive housing development.

At the local level, you can learn about upcoming initiatives to affect housing accessibility and upcoming developments by attending city council and county board of supervisors meetings, and by connecting with community advocacy organizations. In Los Angeles, this list includes United Way of Greater Los Angeles, Southern California Association for Non-Profit Housing (SCANPH), Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN), Community Coalition (CoCo), and Alliance for Community Transit–Los Angeles (ACT–LA). These organizations work with diverse partners and community networks on time-sensitive efforts, such as:

- Supporting local affordable and supportive housing developments — especially in your neighborhood!

- Opposing laws that seek to criminalize people for experiencing homelessness.

By adding your voice to the growing chorus of outspoken advocates who support equity-centered housing policies, you make a difference, motivate leaders to act, and help realize a brighter, more stable future.

You can sign up to show your support of the Roadmap Home 2030 plan, and urge your legislators to support it as well: https://roadmaphome2030.org/action/

While it is focused on California specifically, it provides a comprehensive framework and solutions guide where you can learn how to advance transformative and impactful policy and structural change to ensure that all people have safe, stable, and affordable housing. We encourage you to take a look, share the information, and show your support!

Case Study

Extensive research shows there are several evidence-based approaches that are effective in helping people successfully exit homelessness and maintain stable housing. For all individuals experiencing homelessness, interventions that use a "Housing First" approach have a strong track record of success.

To address what was the sixth-largest population of Americans experiencing homelessness in the country, Houston adopted a Housing First strategy that prioritized providing permanent housing to unhoused individuals as quickly as possible while providing a host of voluntary supportive services to ensure they remained housed over the long term.

Houston achieved a 63 percent reduction in regional home-lessness between 2011 and 2022, more than any other of the 10 largest U.S. cities. Over 90 percent housed under Houston's Housing First program have remained housed for over two years. Further progress has been challenged by a housing shortage.

https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/news/how-houstons-home-less-strategy-became-a-model-for-other-us-cities/637515/

https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/news/houston-housing-first-model-reduced-homelessness-how-it-works-obstacles/637728/

https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/14/headway/hous-ton-homeless-people.html

Further Context

The number of people forced into homelessness has gone up because the number of homes available to residents with little income has gone down. The severe shortage of affordable housing is the number one driver of the crisis we are experiencing. In California, where *UNZIPPED* takes place, for example, there were only 23 affordable units available for every 100 extremely low-income renter households who needed a home as of 2020. Housing vouchers, shallow rental subsidies, and targeted programs for specific subpopulations — such as veterans, unhoused youth, and domestic violence survivors — are additional tools to help individuals successfully return to stable housing.

A good way to understand just how many people are forced into homelessness is to examine the number of individuals who accessed homelessness services (like shelter or outreach) over the course of one year. In California, for instance, more than 270,000 unhoused individuals across the state received these kind of services during 2021. This number is over 100,000 persons larger than the state's Point-in-Time Count for that year. Solving homelessness requires the ongoing resources necessary to implement solutions at this scale of need.

The majority of unhoused individuals are living on the street, in their vehicles, or in other places not meant to serve as homes. There are not enough shelter beds to accommodate the number of people lacking an indoor place to rest on a given night. That said, shelter is not housing. And a "right to shelter" is not the same as a "right to housing." The shortage of shelter beds and concerns with the conditions of shelters have kept large numbers of unhoused people sleeping on sidewalks, in parks, and in other spaces. That's why interim housing options — like motel stays and tiny homes — can be necessary short-term strategies. But these options can only contribute to solving homelessness when they are coupled with services that focus on moving individuals into permanent housing as quickly as possible.

Homelessness has devastating effects on the individuals who experience it because having a home is a basic necessity to maintain health, work, school, and dignified living conditions. Lack of stable housing seriously disrupts individuals' ability to obtain or keep a job or to make sure that children are able to attend and focus on school.

It's not surprising that unhoused individuals faced serious health risks throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Homelessness exposes individuals to serious health risks and makes it difficult to take care of one's health and access health care, and can exacerbate chronic or acute health conditions. In fact, adults experiencing homelessness often have health problems and difficulty with daily living activities that are more typical of people 20 years older.

The stress of homelessness can also seriously harm individuals' mental well-being. Research shows that the trauma of experiencing homelessness can cause people to develop mental health problems for the first time and can worsen existing behavioral health challenges. Longer time spent without a home is linked to higher levels of mental distress and more damage from coping behaviors like substance use.

Abusive or neglectful family situations can cause young people to become unhoused, pointing to a role for the child welfare system in preventing and addressing youth homelessness. Domestic violence can also be the trigger that pushes individuals into homelessness, especially women and mothers with children, pointing to a role for services that directly address the experiences and needs of survivors. The justice system has an impact as well. This is both because of laws that criminalize homelessness (such as laws that make public camping punishable by citation or arrest) and because individuals who have a conviction record or are reentering the community after incarceration face daunting barriers to securing and maintaining stable housing.

People of all ages and backgrounds can be forced into homelessness, but some populations are overrepresented amongst the unhoused.

Black, Native American, Latino and Pacific Islander people are more likely to experience homelessness. These populations and other communities of color are often disproportionately impacted by structural racism and inequitable treatment and access to opportunities in education, employment, health, the justice system, and other domains. Among youth, those who identify as LGBTQ+ are especially likely to experience homelessness, and individuals who identify as transgender or gender-non-conforming are more likely than cisgender individuals to be unsheltered when they experience homelessness. The majority of unhoused individuals are single adults, but an important share are also families with children and unaccompanied and parenting youth. A substantial share of single adults experiencing homelessness are older adults.

Homelessness policy proposals can be multifaceted. They can also be political flashpoints. Divergent approaches to address this very visible issue have emerged. Some decision makers have made it illegal to camp in public spaces. Some seek to build more shelter beds or invest in tiny homes. Some try to take a more holistic approach and may try out several initiatives. The complexity of the issue requires a multi-pronged approach to help people depending on what their particular needs are and where they are in preventing or exiting homelessness.

Solving homelessness requires a system of housing and services with enough capacity and investment to meet the needs of all those who are experiencing homelessness in every locality. Building that capacity requires investing in proven effective approaches at a scale that meets the need — and then providing reliable ongoing funding so that effective efforts can be sustained. Partnership between the state, federal, and local governments is important to mobilize the resources needed for impact at scale. Roadmap Home 2030 was created to put all of these housing and homeless policy solutions in one place.

Bottom line: Solving homelessness is possible.

Useful Terms

Abstinence-Contingent Housing
Abstinence-contingent housing is a form of behavioral intervention contingency management, in which objective testing of alcohol and drug use occurs frequently and positive samples result in immediate removal from housing. It would be more appropriate to take a harm-reduction approach or employ Housing First. These important treatment-access and policy concerns should be addressed in future research.

Sources:
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5154858/
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2764243/

Access to Health Services
Unhoused individuals experience poor access to healthcare, leading to delayed clinical presentation, higher rates of hospitalization (often for preventable conditions), and a significant burden on the acute health system. Housing First programs have shown health benefits and reduced use of emergency services.

Sources:
https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2009.180109
https://doi.org/10.1097/PHH.0000000000001219

Adaptive Reuse
Adaptive reuse is the process of taking an older or underutilized structure and repurposing that structure for a new or different use. Adaptive reuse of vacant and underutilized office buildings and other structures helps address the severe shortage of affordable housing in many communities. This property conversion of un-derutilized structures is a cost-effective means of developing new housing supply while reducing environmental impact.

Sources:
https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/masters_papers/9s161g42d
https://www.naiop.org/advocacy/legislative-priorities/adaptive-reuse/

Accessory Dwelling Unit
An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a secondary dwelling unit with complete independent living facilities for one or more persons and generally takes three forms:

1. Detached: The unit is separated from the primary residential structure.
2. Attached: The unit is attached to the primary residential structure.
3. Repurposed Existing Space: Space (e.g., master bedroom or garage) within the primary residence is converted into an independent living unit.

The confluence of a lack of oversight and the unproven efficacy of ADUs as low-income housing means that low-income housing units exist on paper, but not in operation.

Sources:
https://www.hcd.ca.gov/planning-and-community-development/housing-elements/building-blocks/accessory-dwelling-units
https://www.mdpi.com/2413-8851/2/3/89

Affordable Housing
Affordable housing is generally defined as housing for which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities.

Sources:
https://archives.hud.gov/local/nv/goodstories/2006-04-06glos.cfm
https://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/70761/Affordable_Housing_Overview.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Accessing Private Market Housing
Helping low- and moderate-income households access private market housing is one way to increase their access to quality, affordable housing. Such strategies can include subsidies, grants or loans, or personalized housing search assistance.

Sources:
https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/private-market-housing
https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/housing-choice-voucher-program-section-8

Addressing Vacant or Abandoned Properties

Vacant lots and structures are associated with negative economic, health, and crime outcomes in the areas around them. Tracking, demolishing, and beautifying vacant or abandoned properties and lots has been shown to improve outcomes predictive of upward economic mobility.

Sources:
https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/vacant-properties
https://www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.1718503115

Built for Zero—Data-Driven Solutions

Community Solutions' Built for Zero program is a highly effective methodology aimed at addressing homelessness by implementing data-backed, community-level measurement of unhoused populations through real-time, by-name data. This data is then used by an integrated command center team to create tailored solutions and strategic housing investments to combat homelessness. The Built for Zero program has achieved remarkable success in reducing the homeless population to "functional zero" in three U.S. municipalities: Bergen County, New Jersey; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and Rockford, Illinois.

Building Innovation

A relatively low-cost component of a broader housing supply strategy can include updating processes for construction permits, environmental reviews, and waiving related fees. Such changes are mostly operational, and can facilitate more rapid housing development and, in turn, a more favorable building environment.

Sources:
https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/overall-housing-supply
https://www.nber.org/papers/w20536

Broadband Access and Digital Skills

Providing low-income residents with broadband internet access, hardware subsidies, and digital skills classes has been proven to positively impact economic mobility outcomes. Expanding broadband access in rural communities is associated with increased job and population growth, higher rates of new business formation, and lower unemployment rates.

Sources:
https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/broadband-access
https://www.richmondfed.org/publications/community_development/community_scope/2020/

Building Restrictions

The original purpose of zoning and land-use regulations was to protect homeowners in residential areas from devaluation by industrial use, and protection of public health and safety from contaminants. Currently, restrictive zoning and land-use regulations reduce the supply of housing, including multifamily and low-income housing. As a result of the reduced supply, many U.S. cities suffer from housing affordability problems.

Sources:
https://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa-823.pdf
http://www.jstor.org/stable/43100684

Co-Housing / Shared Housing

A form of community living composed of private homes supplemented by substantial self-managed common facilities and activities aimed at everyday living.

Sources:
https://publichealthreviews.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40985-020-00138-1%20/
http://www.jstor.org/stable/41429168

Commercial Corridor Revitalization

Initiatives to revitalize commercial corridors seek to stimulate a local economy through a group of short- and long-term interventions. These include physical improvements to the built environment, working with existing businesses to grow, incentivizing new businesses to launch in the area, and dedicating space and resources to strengthening community ties, such as through public art and cultural programming.

Sources:
https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/commercial-corridor-revitalization
https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/community-development-financial-institutions

Community Development Financial Institutions

Community development financial institutions (CDFIs) help to address the financial needs of under-served, predominantly low-income communities. CDFIs include community development banks, credit unions, business and microenterprise loan funds, and venture capital funds. Through special purpose funds, they leverage state and local monies, philanthropic investment, and the CDFI's own equity to attract larger quantities of market-rate senior debt. The funds' combined capital stack provides lower-cost debt to finance land acquisition and affordable housing development.

Sources:
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.0735-2166.2004.00196.x
https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/98056/financing_the_development_in_transit_oriented_development_0.pdf

Community Land Trusts

The primary focus of community land trusts (CLTs) is housing for individuals and communities. A CLT is a system of tenure in which the underlying land is owned by a mission-driven entity, usually a nonprofit, whereas the buildings on the land are owned or leased by residents. CLTs have the explicit goal of promoting affordable housing and contain legal provisions governing ownership and transfer to keep units affordable in perpetuity.

Sources:
http://www.jstor.org/stable/42659805
https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr-edge-featd-article-110419.html

Continuum of Care Model

The Continuum of Care (CoC) model for homeless services creates a coherent system of services and planning processes to solve homelessness. Emergency shelters, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing are distinct programmatic responses to address the housing and service needs of the unhoused population under the CoC model for homeless service delivery.

Sources:
https://endhomelessness.org/resource/what-is-a-continuum-of-care/
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J147v30n01_05

Creating Affordable Housing

Legislative, operational, and financial methods can be used to facilitate the construction of more affordable housing. A major pillar of a local strategy to increase the availability of affordable housing is zoning reform. In high-demand areas, inclusionary zoning policies can be an effective local strategy to increase the number of affordable homes. Other strategies for facilitating construction of affordable housing include incentivizing affordable unit development and investing in acquisitions of land for the construction of affordable homes.

Sources:
https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/affordable-housing
https://nonprofithousing.org/what-steps-are-involved-in-creating-affordable-housing/

De Facto Segregation

The description for a situation in which legislation does not overtly segregate by race, but segregation continues from unintentional or fortuitous actions by state and private entities.

Source:
Boddie, E.C. (2018). The Muddled Distinction Between De Jure and De Facto Segregation.
https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/de_facto_segregation#:~:text=De%20facto%20segregation%20was%20a,but%20nevertheless%20school%20segregation%20continued

Gentrification

Gentrification is often defined as the transformation of neighborhoods from low value to high value as a result of in-migration of middle- and upper-income households into existing lower-income urban neighborhoods. This change has the potential to cause displacement of long-time residents and businesses. Displacement happens when long-time or original neighborhood residents move from a gentrified area because of higher rents, mortgages, and property taxes. This process can harm the community's sense of history and belonging, while also affecting vulnerable populations' socioeconomic status, stress levels, and health outcomes. Gentrification often disproportionately affects working-class communities of color who have been displaced by a steady rise in housing prices and limited housing supply in their communities.

Sources:
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/gentrification.htm
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/08854122211051603

High-Intensity Case Management

High Intensity Case Management is another approach that has been shown to be effective in reducing homelessness. This process involves assigning case managers to clients who assess, plan, and facilitate access to health and social services necessary for their recovery. High-intensity case management reduces the number of homeless individuals after 12–18 months by almost half compared to usual services.

Sources:
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.4073/csr.2018.3
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7313544/

Homelessness

The definition of those who are experiencing homelessness includes an individual or family with no fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, or who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence (within 14 days). This also includes individuals or families who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, have no other residence, and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing. Those experiencing homelessness should include "hidden homeless" and "precariously housed" populations who are couch surfing or staying with family or friends temporarily. There are nation-wide estimates of the couch-homeless at one to two percent of the population, but there is no way to estimate local populations. It's important to note that those who are couch surfing, who live in motels or on tribal lands are often missed or are not counted among the unhoused population because they are hard to find or discern. Youth who are experiencing homelessness are also undercounted. Within this population are unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth who qualify under other federal statutes, such as the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. They have not had a lease or ownership interest in a housing unit in the last 60 or more days, have had two or more moves in the last 60 days, and are likely to continue to be unstably housed because of disability or multiple barriers to employment.

Chronic homelessness is used to describe people who have experienced homelessness for at least a year — or repeatedly — while struggling with a disabling condition such as a serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or physical disability. This can also include a person leaving an institution where they stayed for less than 90 days with the condition that they still meet the above prior to entering. Aside from individuals, families can be considered chronically homeless if the head of household meets the above definition.

Sources:
https://www.acgov.org/cda/hcd/documents/HUD-Homeless-Rule.pdf
https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-funding/active-funding/esg/docs/Homelessness-101.pdf
https://www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/precariously-housed/Hobackreport.pdf

Homeless Unions

Homeless unions are organizations made up of homeless individuals or those at risk of becoming homeless who come together to advocate for their rights and needs. The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, which was founded in 1980, has been instrumental in advocating for policies that benefit homeless individuals, such as the Illinois Bill of Rights for the Homeless Act (HBOR) in 2013.

The Los Angeles Community Action Network, is a grassroots organization that includes homeless and low-income individuals working together to address issues related to homelessness and poverty. The organization has successfully campaigned for policy changes, such as the adoption of the California Homeless Bill of Rights.

Sources:
https://www.chicagohomeless.org/
https://dignityandrights.org/2013/11/los-angeles-community-action-network-and-allies-launch-homeless-bill-of-rights-campaign/

Housing Cooperatives

Housing cooperatives are democratically controlled corporations established to provide housing for members. Each household owns stock in the corporation, which entitles the member to occupy a unit of housing. The stock gives the owners an exclusive right to occupy a particular dwelling unit and participate in governance of the cooperative.

Sources:
https://www.cccd.coop/co-op-info/co-op-types/housing-co-ops
https://reic.uwcc.wisc.edu/house/

Housing First

Housing First is an approach to serving people experiencing homelessness that recognizes an unhoused person must first be able to access permanent housing before stabilizing. Under the Housing First approach, anyone experiencing homelessness should be connected to a permanent home, and programs should remove barriers to accessing the housing. It is based on the "hierarchy of need": people must access basic necessities — like a safe place to live — before being able to achieve quality of life or pursue personal goals. Housing First values choice in participating in services. For this reason, tenants are not required to participate in services to access or retain housing. Housing First results in greater improvements in housing outcomes for unhoused adults in North America.

Sources:

https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-funding/active-funding/docs/Housing-First-Fact-Sheet.pdf

https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2020.305835

Housing Stability and Displacement Prevention

Housing stability and homelessness prevention programs are implemented to help those at risk of displacement or homelessness stay in their current homes. Such approaches can include emergency short-term rental assistance, legal support to tenants at risk of eviction, rapid rehousing initiatives, and "just cause" eviction legislation.

Sources:

https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/housing-stability

https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/legal-support-for-tenants-in-eviction-proceedings

Housing Vouchers

The housing choice voucher program, also referred to as "Section 8," is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Since housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses, and apartments. Research shows that housing vouchers are highly effective at reducing homelessness, housing instability, and overcrowding, and at improving other outcomes for

families and children. Vouchers are also crucial for giving people with low incomes choices about where they live.

Sources:

https://www.hud.gov/topics/housing_choice_voucher_program_section_8

https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/more-housing-vouchers-most-important-step-to-help-more-people-afford-stable-homes

Housing Precarity

Housing precarity refers to conditions or events which lead to heightened insecurity in a person's housing status. This could be job loss which reduces a tenant's ability to pay rent, a notice of eviction served by a property owner who wishes to remove a unit from the rental market, conflicts between property owners and tenants, and more.

Source:

https://homelessnesshub.ucsd.edu/research/research-evictions.html

Increasing Overall Housing Supply

Local governments generally have a range of legislative, regulatory, and operational levers to create the conditions for increasing overall housing supply in their communities. Many local rules and regulations can be reformed to facilitate increases in the net total of available homes. Such changes include eliminating or reducing the use of single-family zoning (where the only legally permitted structures on plots of land are single-family homes), upzoning (permitting denser housing), adapting building codes to enable more efficient construction, and encouraging mixed-use developments. Many of these changes are legislative, requiring passage by a local council.

Sources:

https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/overall-housing-supply

https://www.nber.org/papers/w20536

Interfaith Affordable Housing Initiatives

Interfaith housing initiatives promote the development of supportive and affordable housing on faith-based properties through access to technical assistance and pre-development funds.

Sources:

https://interfaithneighbors.org/affordable-housing/

https://www.iahcny.org/about

Land Value Tax

A land value tax is a method of assessing property taxes that only considers the value of the land itself and related improvements, and not the structures built on the land. It may be thought of as a payment for the benefits received from municipal improvements, such as the street, sewer systems, parks, and schools. Land value tax is intended to encourage development and discourage speculative land investment.

Sources:
https://www.lincolninst.edu/sites/default/files/pubfiles/assessing-theory-practice-land-value-taxation-full_0.pdf
https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ipd/value_capture/defined/land_value_tax.aspx

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits

The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit: The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program gives state and local LIHTC-allocating agencies the equivalent of approximately $8 billion in annual budget authority to issue tax credits for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental housing targeted to lower-income households.

Sources:
https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/lihtc.html
https://www.taxpolicycenter.org/briefing-book/what-low-income-housing-tax-credit-and-how-does-it-work

Maintaining Safe and Healthy Housing

Programs ensuring that existing affordable homes and rental units remain safe, healthy, and high-quality reduces the likelihood of individuals and families forced into homelessness. These programs typically address common home health hazards, which often fall into one of two major categories: physical injury/safety risks and illness-inducing hazards. To ensure property owners have the financial capacity to address home hazards, some programs provide income-eligible property owners with grants and/or loans to assist with repair, rehabilitation, and/or reconstruction of homes.

Sources:
https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/safe-healthy-housing
https://nchh.org/resource-library/report_housing-interventions-and-health_a-review-of-the-evidence.pdf

Mixed-Use Housing Projects

Mixed-use affordable housing buildings collocate residences and commercial uses. Mixed-use development is an example of flexible zoning which allows various types of land uses, including office, commercial, residential, and in some cases, light industrial or manufacturing, to be combined within a single development or district. A major purpose of mixed-use zoning is to allow a balanced mix of office, commercial, and residential uses in close proximity to increase convenience to residents and reduce the number of shopping and/or commuting trips needed.

Sources:
https://archives.huduser.gov/oup/conferences/presentations/hbcu/sanantonio/multifamily_development.pdf
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10511482.2018.1506813?journalCode=rhpd20

NIMBY

NIMBY, an acronym for "Not In My Backyard," is a characterization of opposition by residents to proposed developments (e.g. homeless shelters, free health clinics, multifamily housing, affordable housing) in their local area.

Sources:
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm355
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1078087412469341

Parks and Public Spaces

Parks can be used as places for physical activity, and serve as locations for community gardens or farmers markets, enhancing neighborhood access to healthy foods. Public spaces are often used as venues for cultural activities, hosting classes, exhibitions, performances, and more. Parks and public spaces often increase the value of land in nearby neighborhoods. Because of this, they can be significant accelerators of gentrification and displacement. New investments in parks and green spaces should include measures that reduce the risk of displacement and ensure that current residents benefit from new spaces, facilities, and programming.

Sources:
https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/parks-and-public-spaces
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160412018331751

Permanent Supportive Housing
Strategies addressing chronic homelessness that are Housing First mean that those experiencing chronic homelessness are connected with stable, unconditional housing. After housing is secured, residents are connected to other services as needed, like mental health and substance use treatment. Unconditional, permanent supportive housing can be provided in various forms, including centralized facilities with services provided "in house," or in privately owned units throughout a jurisdiction, where service providers visit tenants regularly.

Sources:
https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/permanent-supportive-housing
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.4073/csr.2018.3

Public Policy
Public policy can be generally defined as a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives. A policy is a purposive course of action taken to deal with a problem or concern, often as a response to demands made on government.

Sources:
https://mainweb-v.musc.edu/vawprevention/policy/definition.shtml#:~:text=This%20is%20true%20at%20all,governmental%20entity%20or%20its%20representatives
https://home.csulb.edu/~msaintg/ppa590/intro.htm

Public Transportation Access and Subsidies
Making public transit accessible through physical infrastructure, service improvements, and financial support improves resident access to work, school, healthcare, and more. Strategies seeking to increase access to public transportation can take many forms, including the creation of new transit infrastructure, increased service quality and/or quantity on existing infrastructure, addressing financial barriers to transit utilization, or addressing non-financial barriers to utilization, like insufficient information on routes, connections, or arrival times.

Sources:
https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/transit-access
https://escholarship.org/content/qt74m7f3rx/qt74m7f3rx_noSplash_cca76ce837d97ca240612898d7011cba.pdf?t=q4ipp5

Racial Covenants
Racial covenants were legally enforceable clauses that were inserted into property deeds to prevent people who were not white from buying or occupying land. Racial covenants were a key element of segregationist policies in the early 20th-century United States.

Sources:
https://mappingprejudice.umn.edu/racial-covenants/what-is-a-covenant#:~:text=Racial%20covenants%20are%20clauses%20that,from%20buying%20or%20occupying%20land
https://www.jstor.org/stable/2657609

Racial Steering
This practice involves directing prospective home buyers to, or away from, areas according to their race.

Sources:
https://repository.uchastings.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1145&context=hastings_race_poverty_law_journal
https://www.jstor.org/stable/795720?origin=crossref

Rapid Re-Housing
Rapid re-housing is an intervention that uses Housing First as a critical part of a community's effective homeless crisis response system. Rapid re-housing quickly connects families and individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing through a tailored package of assistance that may include the use of time-limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services. Rapid rehousing programs help families and individuals living on the streets or in emergency shelters solve the practical and immediate challenges to obtaining permanent housing while reducing the amount of time they experience homelessness, avoiding a near-term return to homelessness, and linking to community resources that enable them to achieve housing stability in the long term.

Sources:
https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Rapid-Re-Housing-Brief.pdf
https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/RRHD-PartII-Outcomes.pdf

Redlining

Redlining can be defined as a discriminatory practice that consists of the systematic denial of services such as mortgages, insurance loans, and other financial services to residents of certain areas, based on their race or ethnicity. Redlining disregards an individual's qualifications and creditworthiness to refuse such services, solely based on the residency of those individuals in minority neighborhoods, which were also quite often deemed "hazardous" or "dangerous." Redlining contributed to segregation, disinvestment, and racial inequities in opportunities for homeownership and wealth accumulation.

Sources:

https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/redlining
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9342590/

Rent Caps, Social Rent, and Rent Control

Rent caps, social rent, and rent control policies are essential tools in stabilizing housing costs and preventing displacement in rapidly gentrifying cities. Rent caps limit rent increases beyond a certain percentage of current rent. Social rent ensures that rents are controlled according to an individual's or household's ability to pay, rather than market rent. Rent control policies limit rent increases on existing rental units, providing tenants with affordable housing options.

Sources:

https://www.oecd.org/social/social-housing-policy-brief-2020.pdf
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?-bill_id=201920200AB1482

Residential Treatment Combined with Case Management

Residential treatment combined with case management is a type of housing that offers mental illness or substance abuse treatment to clients. This type of housing may reduce homelessness and improve housing stability compared to usual services.

Source:

https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.4073/csr.2018.3

Temporary Housing Programs

Transitional housing programs, also known as temporary housing programs (THPs), are intended to gradually ease individuals into housing by satisfying the prerequisites for independent living. THPs offer supportive accommodations and life skills development, and can foster a sense of community among residents. Those living in transitional housing could be, but are not limited to, youth who are exiting the foster system or community members who are escaping domestic violence, and receiving job training or employment guidance while they are housed.

Sources:

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19491247.2019.1663070
https://www.homelesshub.ca/solutions/housing-accommodation-and-supports/transitional-housing

Tenant Organizing

Tenant organizing includes a range of strategies, such as tenants unions, eviction blockades, and rent strikes, aimed at ensuring tenant rights and combating homelessness. Tenant organizing centers on mobilization of residents to address common problems, including substandard living conditions, systematic harassment or intimidation, and threat of an end to assistance programs that keep units affordable to existing tenants.

Sources:

https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/2016AG_Chapter_2-12.pdf
https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20868413.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A6a77f5fbd0fedcf6cb672ad42de96abb&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1

Tiny Homes

Tiny homes are residential structures that may range anywhere from 80 to 400 square feet in size. While tiny homes may not solve the affordable housing crisis outright, they may help to alleviate the ever-increasing demands in the rental market and remove the staggering barriers that those seeking to become homebuyers face when looking to exit the rental market.

Sources:

https://www.hcd.ca.gov/docs/ib2016-01.pdf
https://www.hastingslawjournal.org/the-affordable-housing-crisis-tiny-homes-single-family-zoning/

Traffic and Street Safety Improvements

Initiatives maximizing the number of people — including drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians — who can safely and efficiently utilize public streets and thoroughfares are often implemented alongside efforts to increase public transit usage and efficiency. These strategies include creating shareable and safe roads, reducing car-related risks, increasing walkways and bike lanes, and incorporating public transit.

Sources:
https://catalog.results4america.org/strategies/street-safety
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1447993/

Unhoused

"Unhoused" is a term used an alternative to "homeless" that takes into account the idea that people experiencing homelessness may have places that they feel at "home" without having a permanent residence.

Sources:
https://blanchethouse.org/homeless-houseless-unhoused-glossary-about-homelessness/

Unsheltered

The "unsheltered" are individuals and families that have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.

Sources:
https://www.hudexchange.info/faqs/reporting-systems/homelessness-data-exchange-hdx/pit/pit-general/for-purposes-of-the-point-in-time-pit-count-who-does-hud-consider/#:~:text=In%20general%2C%20for%20purposes%20of,)
https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Unsheltered-Homelessness-and-Homeless-Encampments.pdf
https://bcsh.ca.gov/calich/documents/2021_heap_case_study1.pdf

Upzoning and Inclusionary Zoning

Upzoning increases allowable densities often by relaxing the zoning code's height and bulk requirements or increasing floor area ratios. They aim to encourage denser development and increase housing supplies, and thus improve housing affordability. Increasing density through upzoning makes it possible to produce smaller, lower-cost housing units.

Sources:
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/how-we-rise/2021/07/15/the-double-edged-sword-of-upzoning/
https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26328307.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A3c009e13b90850ffd68ce753517d7ce3&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=

Film Credits

Writer and Director
COLIN K. GRAY

Producers
THE SIBS
- COLIN K. GRAY & MEGAN RANEY AARONS -
JAMILA C. FAIRLEY
CAROL "C.J." GRONNER

Executive Producers
TIM HEADINGTON
THERESA STEELE PAGE
AMAECHI UZOIGWE
ELLIOT V. KOTEK
LUCY LIU
LORIEN GABEL
BUFFALO8
SCREENCRAFT

Co-Executive Producer
NATE KAMIYA

Editors
DAVIDE FIORE
MOHAMED EL MANASTERLY

Director of Photography
TYLER HECKERMAN

Co-Producers
MARC BARANOV
MATT GREEN
MOHAMED EL MANASTERLY

Associate Producer
NICK BAGATELOS

UNZIPPED Movie LLC Investors
DARREN LINDSAY
BRIAN & MARNIE RUF
JEFF RUTHERFORD & DOROTHY KIM
JOHN SHARKEY

Production Crew

Camera Operator, Grip, Gaffer, AC, Swing, Drone Operator
MANNY ANDRADE

Camera Operator, Sound Operator, Swing
MARK MASON

Camera Op, AC, Swing, Grip, Sound Op
DYLAN WHIDDON

Assistant Camera Operator
LY TRAN

Stills Photographer
KELLY FOGEL

Social Impact

Impact Campaign Strategy
THE RABEN GROUP

Impact Affiliates
MERCY HOUSING
THE NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING ALLIANCE
THE NYU FURMAN CENTER
POLICY LINK
PUBLIC ADVOCATES INC.
ST. JOSEPH CENTER
UCLA LUSKIN INSTITUTE ON INEQUALITY AND DEMOCRACY
VENICE FAMILY CLINIC

Impact Policy Researcher
NED PAGELLA

Impact Launch Producer
CHIARA FORNETTI

Impact Hub
PLUS MEDIA SOLUTIONS

Learning Guide
JOURNEYS IN FILM

Educational Sales
VIDEO PROJECT

Featuring (in order of appearance)

WILLIAM ATTAWAY
DE SHAWN HUFF
MONICA PEREZ
MIGUEL BRAVO
TODD VON HOFFMANN
JASON PASCAL
TAMI PARDEE
NAOMI NIGHTINGALE, PHD
BECKY DENNISON
MB BOISSONNAULT
RICK MASSIE
VENICE HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND
MIKE BONIN
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
DR. COLEY KING
SUNNY BAK
TRAVIS BINEN
MARK RYAVEC
ANANYA ROY, PHD
MARCUS WILLIAM
TIM STEFANOFF
VA LECIA ADAMS KELLUM, PHD
NIKOL WILLIAMS
ALANA JADE HUFF
DIAMOND HUFF
CAL ZUPAN
R.T. "ERTE" ATTAWAY
RAYANNE SCHMIDT
VINCENT ATTAWAY
VASSER ATTAWAY

BRIAN FLOATS
TAMELA JONES CARVER
NATHAN RENO
ELIZABETH BENSON FORER
JOSE GARCIA
COREY MCGUIRE
ROBERT THIBODEAU
JURI KOLL
MARK HENDERSON
SKY WILLIE STERN
WILLIE LEE TURNER (A.K.A. KING SOLOMON)
BARBARA LONSDALE
JATAUN VALENTINE
ERIC GARCETTI
SAM AWAD
CHANTEL HUNTER MAH
GARY TYLER
SARA GLAZER
JENNIFER HAY
CARINA DOMINGUEZ
ARMAWD CLAPROTH
AMY FAVAT
KRISTINA VON HOFFMANN
JIM BUDMAN
VANESSA MARCIAL
ERNESTO MORENO
SHANTEA BARNES
DAVID MAZZOLA
KENNETH GOINS

THYRA GOINS
TIM STEFANOFF
ALEXIS SCHULTE
LOGAN DAVIS
SCOTT MANN
SERGIO PEREZ
ELAINE PENSKE
XIPE TOTEC AZTEC DANCE
BISHOP HORACE A. ALLEN
JIM MUREZ
ALISON HURST
JOSEPH BAILEY
BRANDON SHUTTLEWORTH
JOSE NUNO
JEFFERY RICHARDSON
ANDREA MURRAY
CEASAR MEJIA
JESSICA LAWSON
GEORGE WORTHAM
REBECCA WILSON
BRETT WOODS
JASPER HUFF
AWADE KHAN-VARIBA
MARISOL LOPEZ
WILLIAM HAWKINS
MAGGIE LALLY
VENICE BEACH FOOTBALL CLUB
KERYAN ARMSTRONG
SCARLETT ROSE ARMSTRONG

In Memory of

BRIAN ZARATE DAHLHEIMER
BISHOP HORACE A. ALLEN
WILLIE LEE TURNER
DANIEL SORRENTINO

And the 5,630 HOMELESS CITIZENS who died in L.A. County during the five years we made this film.

UNZIPPED *IS DEDICATED TO EVA LERRYN GRAY AND ALL BORN-AND-RAISED VENETIANS PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.*
MAY WE ALL CONTINUE TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES EVERYWHERE.

JOURNEYS IN FILM ™
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