

NAR Issue Summaries

Housing / Homelessness

NAR Committee:

Housing Opportunity Committee

What is the fundamental issue?

On a given night, more than half a million people are experiencing homelessness in America. While the number of homeless has declined (according to HUD's 2015 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress), finding permanent housing for these families and individuals remains a challenging task. Additionally, the number of families facing housing insecurity is on the rise. According to the Center for Housing Policy's Housing Landscape 2016 report, in 2014, some 17.6 million households were severely housing cost burdened, spending more than half of their income on housing costs.

I am a real estate professional. What does this mean for my business?

Many REALTORS® and state and local associations work with programs to reduce homelessness in their communities.

NAR Policy:

NAR supports cost-effective approaches towards preventing and ending homelessness. The individuals and families that are housing insecure or currently experiencing homelessness can be helped through evidence-based approaches, such as "housing first," which prioritizes providing permanent housing as quickly as possible then providing supportive services as needed. NAR urges its state and local REALTOR® associations to work with community stakeholders to develop innovative and proactive strategies to aid citizens experiencing homelessness or facing housing insecurity.

Opposition Arguments:

While there are questions with respect to funding for initiatives to eliminate homelessness, there are no opponents who argue that there is no need to address the problem.

Legislative/Regulatory Status/Outlook

There are a number of federal programs designed to eradicate homelessness. The Continuum of Care (COC) program is the primary tool, which provides funding for nonprofit providers, and State and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families. The Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development have teamed up to specifically eliminate veteran homelessness (today approximately 8% of homeless people are veterans). Also, in 2010, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness developed Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. The Plan was updated in 2012 and again in 2015. The Plan calls for collaboration across the Federal government and among states, local communities, advocates, and private and nonprofit partners to reduce homelessness across all populations.

Current Legislation/Regulation (bill number or regulation)

None at this time.

Legislative Contact(s):

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