

Experiencing Homelessness in Later Life

Strategies for service providers to address this crisis



A RAPIDLY GROWING ISSUE

Older adults are the fastest-growing group of those experiencing homelessness, composing nearly half of the homeless population (Kushel, 2022) and their numbers are estimated to triple by 2030 (Culhane et al., 2019). For more details on how and why this issue continues to grow, please read our previous issue brief.

PROACTIVE IDENTIFICATION

More proactive identification by service providers, such as health clinics and those participating in the No Wrong Door Initiative, of older adults who are severely rent burdened or otherwise at risk of homelessness.



Identification, outreach, and navigation services particularly targeted to older adults experiencing homelessness who have specific barriers to receiving assistance, such as fears of losing their independence or difficulty understanding eligibility requirements

Support from policy makers is integral to affecting change. Policy makers must invest in service provision to support these measures.

Addressing homelessness among older adults is a matter of basic human dignity. Please review our additional brief about strategies for policy makers.

<https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/9ac2d2a7e8c360b4e75932b96f59a20b/addressing-older-adult-homelessness.pdf>

DOCUMENTATION

Better documentation of services and supports available in local communities to enable older adults at risk of or experiencing homelessness to know what assistance is available and how they can access it.



ACCESS

Additional assistance accessing medical equipment, such as eyeglasses and hearing aids, that may be damaged or lost while people experience homelessness.

Improved access to income assistance for eligible individuals through programs such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) to provide a sustainable source of income for a larger share of older adults experiencing homelessness.

TRAINING

Training for case management staff on issues specific to older adults. Coordination across systems to address the variety and unique needs of older adults experiencing homelessness.



Barriers to coordination include siloed funding streams, varying eligibility criteria, overburdened staff, and data sharing barriers.