

Experiencing Homelessness in Later Life

Strategies for policy makers to address this crisis



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.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Increase truly affordable housing capacity

- Invest in the development of affordable housing options for older adults, including subsidized housing and low-income housing tax credit projects.
- Advocate for policies and funding initiatives that support the creation and preservation of affordable housing units targeted towards older adults.
- Increase the availability of permanent supportive housing units designed to meet the needs of older adults experiencing homelessness.
- Retrofit existing housing units to include physical accommodations such as wheelchair accessibility and grab bars to support aging in place.

Increased access to benefits

- Experts noted that restrictive eligibility criteria such as strict income and/or asset requirements, age or disability requirements, and other restrictions prevent or complicate access to key services for older adults experiencing homelessness

Investment in service provision

- Expand access to case management services to provide ongoing support and assistance to older adults in securing and maintaining stable housing.
- Ensure that case managers are trained to address the unique needs of older adults experiencing homelessness, including health and mental health concerns.
- Implement data sharing agreements and technology solutions to overcome barriers like funding silos and data sharing challenges.
- Align policies and regulations to promote cross-system coordination and integration of services for older adults experiencing homelessness.