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# Reducing Homelessness in High-growth Cities

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# Agenda

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- City of Nashville: One of America's Fastest Growing Cities
- Understanding Nashville's Homeless Landscape and Challenges
- Recommendations for Change and Implementation
- Guided Question 1
- Guided Question 2
- Comments



# City of Nashville: One of America's Fastest Growing Cities

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- Greater Nashville Area added nearly 86 new residents per day in 2023, roughly 31,000 new residents in a single year
- The metropolitan area has surpassed 2.1 million residents, and named #10 fastest-growing MSA from 2010-2024
- The city has attracted major corporate headquarters and expansions, including Amazon, AllianceBernstein, and Bridgestone Americas, contributing to its economic vitality
- The city's diverse population includes a significant influx of young professionals, creatives, and entrepreneurs attracted by its vibrant culture, relatively-affordable living costs, job opportunities, low taxes
- In short, Nashville is a dynamic and growing city, attracting both talent and investment across various sectors and contributing to its reputation as a vibrant economic and cultural center in the United States.



# Understanding Nashville's Homeless Landscape and Challenges

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- **Nashville is known as a progressive city, but the homeless service organization and providers were not following best practices. Nashville was not a Housing First City**
- **Collaborative applicant was a separate agency from the lead agency of the CoC. This left Nashville without any one office that had the responsibility, authority, and accountability for Nashville's performance in serving the homeless population**
- **Incomplete data collection**
- **Governing Council did not prioritize equity**

# Understanding Nashville's Homeless Landscape and Challenges

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- Numbers in encampments were growing, particularly the chronically homeless numbers
- The largest shelter provider did not use HMIS, and many other providers only used HMIS for the programs that they received funding for
- Many providers openly admitted they were focusing on the easiest to house rather than the chronically homeless.
- Many of the beds funded through the CoC competition for PSH were going to those who did not meet the criteria
- The City was performing poorly in CoC applications. This was due in large part to the split between the lead agency and the lead applicant

# Recommendations for Change

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- In 2022, the mayor's office engaged SHK Consulting through Housing NOLA to perform an evaluation of the housing and homeless situations
- The first recommendation made was for the city become housing first, which Mayor John Cooper approved
- Next, that Coordinated Entry start targeting the chronically homeless (both sheltered and unsheltered) with an emphasis on providing housing for those living in encampments. This had to be done while keeping the pathways to housing open for other vulnerable populations
- We also recommended that the governing council have equitable representation of the people that they are serving



# Recommendations for Change

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- **Create a stand-alone Office of Homeless Services that serves as the collaborative applicant and the lead agency. This office should have the authority, responsibility, and accountability for homeless response.**
- **Decrease its size, review its governance, by-laws, and subcommittee structure.**
  - **The governing council was very large 25 with over 14 subcommittees and was not representative of the population being served.**
- **Increase coordination with state agencies and other philanthropic organizations**

# Recommendations for Change

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- **Develop encampment closure strategy**
- **Outreach workers and service providers need to fully enter data into HMIS, improve data quality and coverage, including data from providers that don't receive funding**
- **Start building a robust PSH portfolio**



# Implementation

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- Mayor Cooper proposed and Metro Council approved allocating \$50M toward ending homelessness in Nashville
- Nashville is currently building its consumer advisory board
- At this time, Nashville has more units than vouchers (the opposite was true the previous years)
- The City has successfully closed 4 encampments
- Governing council, selected the first executive director of the new Office of Homeless Services
- In the process of building the bridge to the Mission's data system (the largest shelter in the city)
- Working with each agency and organization to ensure that individuals are entered upon first contact so that we can have an accurate accounting for the length of time individuals are homeless.

# Guided Question #1

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**What would you do with \$50M dedicated to ending homelessness in your city?**

**What systems would you put in place?**

**Who is missing from the table?**



# Overview

Total Investment : \$50 million in Homelessness



**Temporary Interim Housing-RS 2022-1698-\$9M** temporary interim gap housing



**Gap Financing for Permanent Supportive Housing-RS 2022-1696-\$25M** to local housing authority for low-cost loans for affordable housing units



**Housing First Supportive Services-RS 2022-1697-\$9M** for Housing First Supportive Services



**Low Barrier Housing Collective and Competitive Grants-RS 2022-1699-\$7M** for Low Barrier Housing Collective & Competitive Grants



**Tracking the \$50 Million Investment in Homelessness**

<https://www.nashville.gov/departments/office-homeless-services/data>

## Guided Question #2

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**What type of resistance to change have your communities faced?**

**What strategies and tactics are you employing to overcome resistance?**



COMMENTS