

Where Does Homelessness Happen?

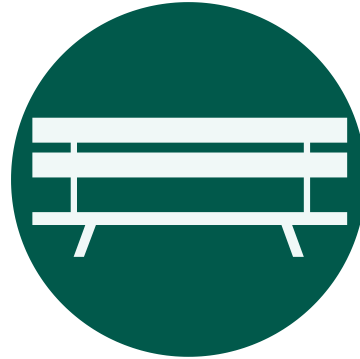
Understanding the definitions of homelessness



Shelter/Mission

Organized shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness

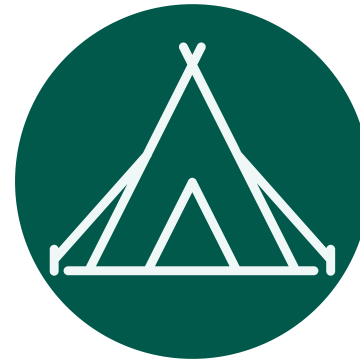
Vehicles



Street/Outside

Abandoned Buildings

or other places generally not considered safe or fit for occupancy



Encampments

Typically including: residents sleeping outside in tents or other physical structures, storing belongings in the same location for a sustained period

Single Room Occupancy (SRO)/ Hotels/Motels

or other day-to-day paid housing



Transitional Housing

Time-limited housing intended to support a transition to permanent housing

Considered homeless by the U.S. Department of [Health & Human Services \(HHS\)](#) but not "literally" homeless by [Housing & Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)



Exiting Incarceration

with no plans for permanent housing or shelter

Exiting Treatment

with no plans for permanent housing or shelter



Supportive Housing

Permanent or long-term option designed to provide housing assistance paired with supportive services

Couch-Surfing (Doubled Up)

or living with others in an otherwise temporary arrangement



At-Risk of Homelessness

Such as facing eviction, among other [unstable situations](#)

Homelessness = Housing Instability

"A recognition of the instability of an individual's living arrangements is critical to the definition of homelessness."

[Principles of Practice – A Clinical Resource Guide for Health Care for the Homeless Programs](#)

Key Takeaways

- Duration of homelessness is irrelevant for categorizing shelter status for health care providers. But it has everything to do with eligibility for different HUD services, specifically housing placements.
- The [HHS](#) and [Department of Education](#) definitions of homelessness are broad and health care providers should make full use of this breadth. But it is important to know what other services patients are or are not eligible for.
- Health care providers have a crucial role in determining "chronic" homelessness and eligibility for other services by diagnosing disability and medical vulnerability.
- Many who meet the definition of homelessness do not consider themselves homeless or do not disclose their housing status due to [stigma and discrimination](#).

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