

***Hate, Violence, and Death  
on Main Street USA:  
A Report on Hate Crimes  
and Violence Against  
People Experiencing Homelessness  
from 1999 - 2002***



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## **The following NCH staff and interns assisted in the publication of this report:**

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# Introduction

The arrest of three men in the July brutal and savage beating death of Gerald King, Jr. forced the concepts of hate and homelessness to the forefront of local minds. Despite the gruesome and seemingly singular nature of his death, King's death was one of many angry and vicious attacks committed against people experiencing homelessness that occurred during 2002. In August, a bus driver in Los Angeles ran over a homeless man in a battle of "wills," after refusing to let the homeless man board his bus. In October, an 18-year-old man in San Luis Obispo climbed a fence and jumped from it several times landing on a homeless man's head. Also in October, three Navy Men pelted several homeless people with paintballs. In Springfield, Ohio, another homeless man was sleeping on a porch during a hot August night when he was set on fire.

Discrimination against people experiencing homelessness has become accepted in today's society. Michael Savage, the host of the radio talk show Savage Nation, said on April 23, 2002 that, "In a sane society, they [bums] would be beaten up, thrown in a van, and thrown in a work camp." Statements such as these reinforce negative and violent stereotypes against homeless individuals. The continual size of news reports of hate crimes and violence against people experiencing homelessness has led the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) to publish a four-year study examining hate crimes and violence committed against people experiencing homelessness from 1999 – 2002. The fourth consecutive report, "*Hate, Violence, an Death on Main Street USA: A Report on Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness in 2002*" was also released.

Over the past several years, advocates and homeless shelter workers from around the country have seen an alarming increase in reports of homeless men, women and even children being killed, beaten, and harassed. In 1999, NCH, along with its Civil Rights Work Group, a nationwide network of civil rights and homeless advocates, responded to this concern and produced the first compilation of its kind, *No More Homeless Deaths! Hate Crimes: A Report Documenting Violence Against Men and Women Homeless in the U.S.* The following year (2000), NCH published *A Report of Hate Crimes and Violence Against People Who Are Homeless in the United States in 2000*. In 2001, *Hate. A Compilation of Violent Crimes Committed Against Homeless People in the U.S. in 2001* was completed. These reports present the known incidences of hate crimes and violence against the homeless population. These annual reports aim:

1. To compile the incidence of hate crimes and violence against people who are homeless that NCH has received and reviewed in order to document this alarming trend.
2. To make lawmakers and the public aware of this serious issue.
3. To recommend proactive measures to be taken.

The term "hate crime" generally conjures up images of cross burnings and lynchings, swastikas on Jewish synagogues, and horrific murders of gays and lesbians. In 1968, the U.S. Congress defined a hate crime as a crime in which the defendant intentionally selects a victim, or in the case of a property crime, the property that is the object of the crime, because of their race, color or national origin (Title 18 U.S.C Section 245). The

first federal law to combat hate crimes, 18 USC Section 245, passed in 1968. It mandated that the government must prove both that the crime occurred because of a victim's membership in a designated group and because the victim was engaged in certain specified federally-protected activities -- such as serving on a jury, voting, or attending public school.<sup>1</sup>

Hate crimes are commonly called bias-motivated crimes, referring to the prejudice or partiality of the perpetrator against the victim's real or perceived grouping or circumstance. Most hate crimes are committed not by organized hate groups, but by individual citizens who harbor a strong resentment against a certain group of people. Some are "mission offenders," who believe they are on a mission "to cleanse the world of a particular evil." Others are "scapegoat offenders," who project their resentment toward the growing economic power of a particular racial or ethnic group through violent actions. Still others are "thrill seekers," those who take advantage of a vulnerable and disadvantaged group in order to satisfy their own pleasures.<sup>2</sup> Thrill seekers, primarily in their teens, are the most common perpetrators of violence against the homeless population.

For documenting hate crimes and violence NCH relies on news reports and information relayed to us by homeless shelters around the country for the data and documentation that it includes in its reports. Although NCH acts as the nationwide repository of hate crimes/violence against homeless people, there is no systematic method of collecting and documenting such reports. Many of these violent acts go unpublicized and/or unreported, thereby making it difficult to assess the true situation. Often, homeless people do not report crimes committed against them because of mental health issues, substance abuse, fear of retaliation, past incidents, or frustration with police. Some cases this year were also omitted because the victims were found beaten to death, but no suspects could be identified. In addition, the report does not take into account the large number of sexual assaults, especially on homeless women.

Federal bias crime laws enacted subsequently have provided additional coverage. The Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990 (HCSA) mandates the Justice Department to collect data from law enforcement agencies about "crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based upon race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity."<sup>3</sup> The Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act, enacted as a section of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, defines a hate crime as "*a crime in which the defendant intentionally selects a victim, or in the case of a property crime, the property that is the object of the crime, because of the actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person.*" This measure only applies to, inter alia, attacks and vandalism which occur in national parks and on federal property.<sup>4</sup>

The most recent piece of legislation, Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act (H.R. 1343, S. 625), introduced in the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, stands to strengthen existing

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Anti-Defamation League, [http://www.adl.org/legislative\\_action/hatecrimes\\_briefing.html](http://www.adl.org/legislative_action/hatecrimes_briefing.html)

<sup>2</sup> Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, [www.ojp.usdoj.gov](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov)

<sup>3</sup> Source: Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, [www.civilrights.org](http://www.civilrights.org)

<sup>4</sup> Source: Anti-Defamation League, [http://www.adl.org/legislative\\_action/hatecrimes\\_briefing.html](http://www.adl.org/legislative_action/hatecrimes_briefing.html)

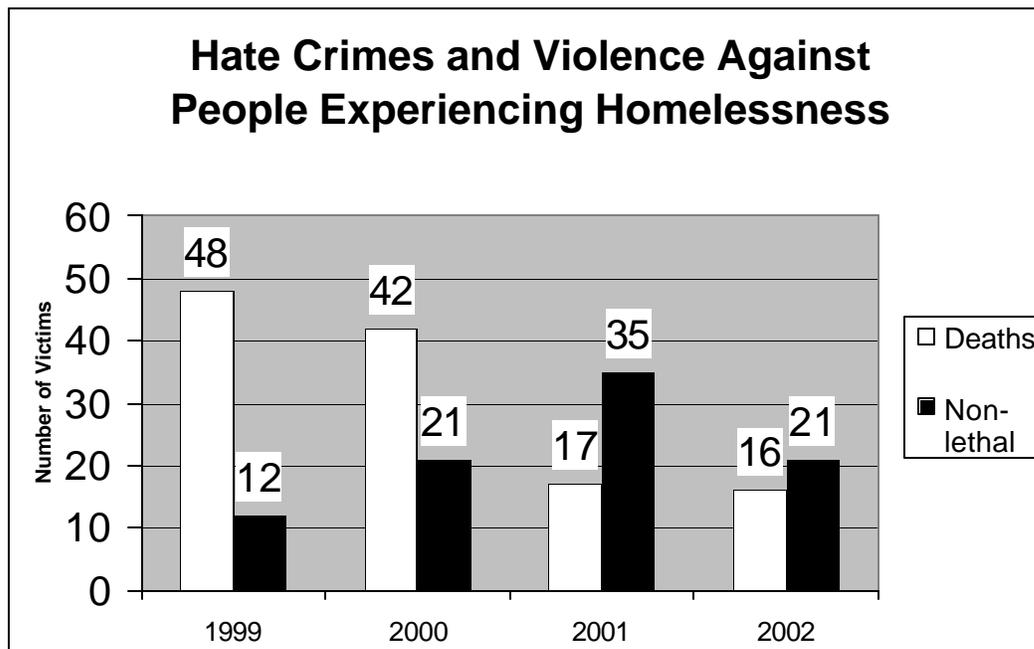
federal hate crime laws in two ways. First, it would expand the current law to reach all the cases where individuals kill or injure others because of bias against religion, color, national origin or race. Second, it would expand the U.S. Department of Justice's ability to prosecute individuals who commit violent crimes against individuals because of their gender, disability, or sexual orientation. There is currently no federal criminal prohibition against violent crimes directed at individuals because of their *housing status*.

H.R. 1343/S. 625 had broad bipartisan support, with 250 co-sponsors in the House and 51 co-sponsors in the Senate. These companion bills are expected to be reintroduced in the current session of the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress. The National Coalition for the Homeless aims to include *housing status* in the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act and in future pieces of legislation. By including *housing status*, hate crimes and violent acts toward people experiencing homelessness will be more appropriately handled and prosecuted. Additionally, if victims know that a system is in place to prosecute such crimes, they are more likely to come forward to report these crimes. People who are forced to live and sleep on the streets for lack of an appropriate alternative are in an extremely vulnerable situation, and it is unacceptable that they are not protected by hate crime prevention laws.

A main objective of this report is to educate lawmakers, advocates, and the general public about the problem of hate crimes and violence against people who are homeless in order to instigate change and ensure protection of civil rights for everyone, regardless of their economic circumstances or housing status. As part of its mission, National Coalition for the Homeless is committed to creating the systemic and attitudinal changes necessary to end homelessness. A major component of these changes must include the societal guarantee of safety and protection and a commitment by lawmakers to combat violent acts and hate crimes against people who experience homelessness.

## Four-Year Study

Advocates, homeless shelter workers, and National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) all began to recognize that reports of hate crimes and violent acts against the homeless were increasing with frequency and brutality. As a result, NCH began publishing annual reports documenting hate crimes and violent attacks against people experiencing homelessness in 1999. These annual reports have not only served to document the number of deaths and non-lethal attacks, but have included the individual stories of the victims of these crimes. This four-year study makes evident the great number of crimes as well as the large geographic area in which they occur



**Total number of deaths over 4 years (1999 – 2002): 123**

**Total number of non-lethal attacks over 4 years (1999 – 2002): 89**

**Number of different cities where crimes took place: 98**

**Number of states and Puerto Rico: 34**

NCH developed a point system for cities and states where hate crimes had occurred. A city was awarded two points for each death and one point for each non-lethal act.

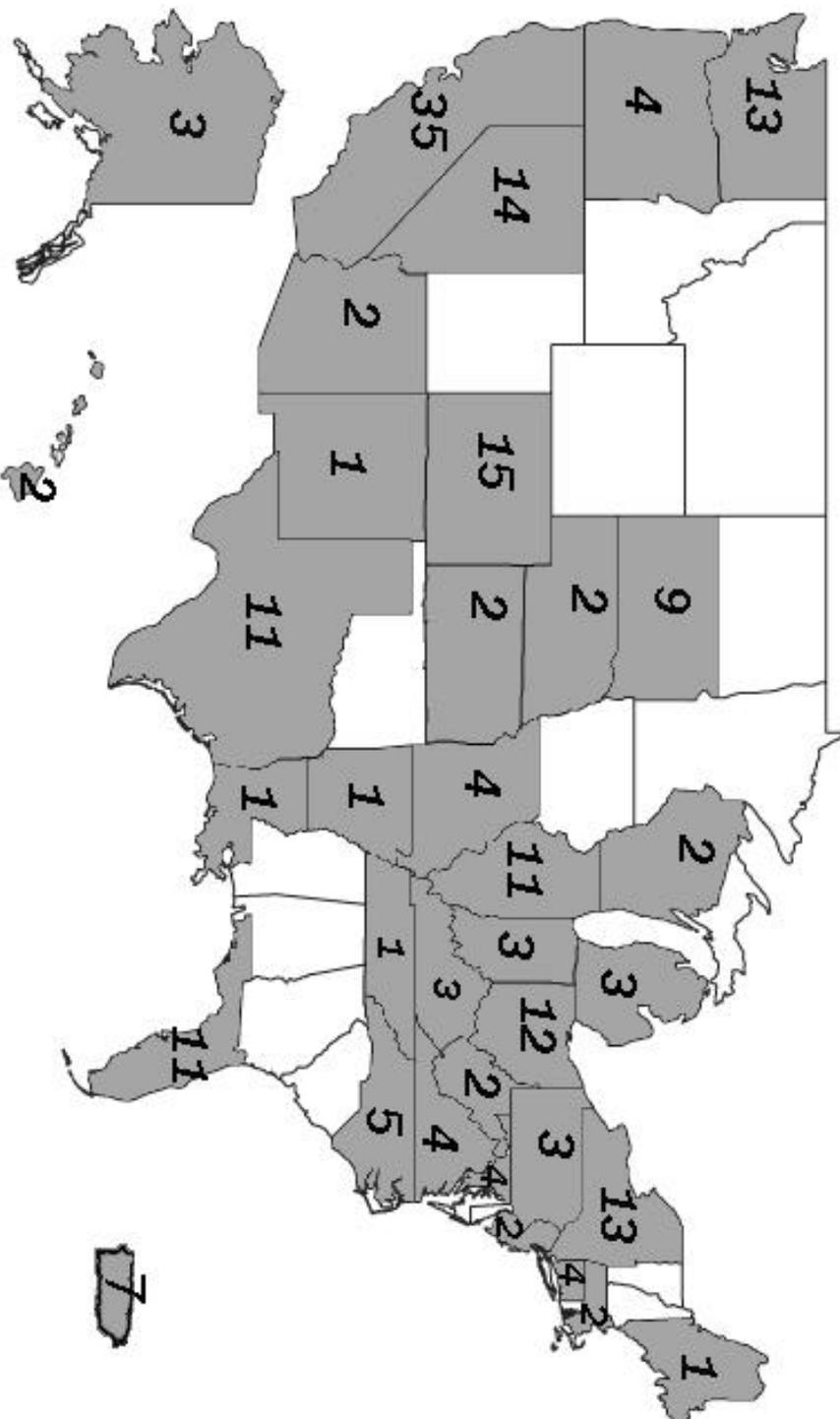
### **Top 20 Most Dangerous Cites for People Experiencing Homelessness**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1. Denver, CO</b>                       | <b>8. Baltimore, MD -</b>                    |
| <b>2. Las Vegas, NV</b>                    | <b>Colorado Springs, CO -</b>                |
| <b>3. Rapid City, SD</b>                   | <b>Fort Worth, TX - Jeffersonville, IN -</b> |
| <b>4. Toledo, OH</b>                       | <b>Los Angeles, CA - Raleigh, NC -</b>       |
| <b>5. New York City, NY</b>                | <b>San Diego, CA - Santa Cruz, CA</b>        |
| <b>6. Chicago, IL</b>                      | <b>9. Albany, NY - Anchorage, AK</b>         |
| <b>7. Kansas City, MO - Portland, OR -</b> | <b>10. Tacoma, WA</b>                        |
| <b>Seattle, WA</b>                         |  |

### **Top 21 Most Dangerous States for People Experiencing Homelessness**

- 1. California**
- 2. Colorado**
- 3. Washington State**
- 4. Ohio**
- 5. Nevada**
- 6. New York & Texas**
- 7. South Dakota & Illinois**
- 8. Florida**
- 9. Missouri & Oregon**
- 10. Maryland, North Carolina,  
Puerto Rico, & Virginia**
- 11. Connecticut, Indiana, & Pennsylvania**
- 12. Alaska & Michigan**

Total Number of Deaths and Nonlethal Acts From  
1999 - 2002



Numbers indicate victims of hate crimes and violence.

## Cities where hate crimes/violence occurred from 1999 – 2002

Albany (NY)—4 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 3 non-lethal acts.  
Anchorage (AK)—3 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths and 1 non-lethal act.  
Arlington (VA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Aurora (IL)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Austin (TX)—2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.  
Baltimore (MD)—3 separate incidents resulting in 3 deaths.  
Bay Point (CA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Bayamon, (Puerto Rico)—1 incident resulting in 4 non-lethal acts.  
Berkeley (CA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Bloomington (IL)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Bremerton (WA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Burton (MI)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Cambridge (MA)—2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.  
Champaign (IL)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Charlotte Co. (FL)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Chicago (IL)—5 separate incidents resulting in 4 deaths and 1 non-lethal act.  
Cincinnati (OH)—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 non-lethal acts.  
Cleveland (OH)—1 incident resulting in 2 non-lethal acts.  
Colorado Springs (CO)—4 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths and 2 non-lethal acts.  
Covington (KY)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Dale City (VA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Dallas (TX)—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths.  
Denver (CO)—9 separate incidents resulting in 9 deaths and 2 non-lethal acts.  
Detroit (MI)—1 incident resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.  
El Sobrante (CA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Elgin (IL)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Eureka (CA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Fayetteville (NC)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Fillee (NE)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Fort Lauderdale (FL)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Fort Worth (TX)—3 separate incidents resulting in 3 deaths.  
Fredericksburg (VA)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Gainesville (FL)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Galveston (TX)—3 separate incidents resulting in 3 non-lethal acts.  
Hamilton (OH)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Hartford (CT)—2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.  
Hayward (CA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Hilo (HI)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Hollywood (FL)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Honolulu (HI)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Houston (TX)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Huntington (WV)—1 incident resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.  
Hyattsville (MD)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Inglewood (CA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Jeffersonville (IN)—1 incident resulting in 3 deaths.  
Kansas City (KS)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.

Kansas City (MO)—4 separate incidents resulting in 4 deaths.  
Kent (WA)—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths.  
Kissimmee (FL)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Las Vegas (NV)—13 separate incidents resulting in 4 deaths and 9 non-lethal acts.  
Lawrence (KS)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Livingston (LA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Los Angeles (CA)—3 separate incidents resulting in 3 deaths.  
Louisville (KY)—1 incident resulting in 2 non-lethal acts.  
Memphis (TN)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Miami (FL)—2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.  
Milwaukee (WI)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Modesto (CA)—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths.  
Monticello (AR)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
New Britain (CT)—1 incident resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.  
New York City (NY)—8 separate incidents resulting in 3 deaths and 5 non-lethal acts.  
Norristown (PA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Omaha (NE)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Passaic (NJ)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Paterson (NJ)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Peoria (IL)—2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.  
Philadelphia, (PA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Pittsburgh (PA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Portland (ME)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Portland (OR)—4 separate incidents resulting in 4 deaths.  
Raleigh (NC)—4 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths and 2 non-lethal acts.  
Rapid City (SD)—8 separate incidents resulting in 8 deaths.  
Reno (NV)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Richmond (VA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Sacramento (CA)—2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 2 non-lethal acts.  
San Diego (CA)—4 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths and 2 non-lethal acts.  
San Francisco (CA)—2 separate incidents resulting in 4 non-lethal acts.  
San Jose (CA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
San Juan (Puerto Rico)—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 non-lethal acts.  
San Luis Obispo (CA)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Santa Ana (CA)—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 deaths.  
Santa Cruz (CA)—6 separate incidents resulting in 6 non-lethal acts.  
Santa Fe (NM)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Santurce, (Puerto Rico)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Sarasota (FL)—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 non-lethal acts.  
Seattle (WA)—4 separate incidents resulting in 4 deaths.  
Sioux Falls (SD)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Spokane (WA)—2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.  
Springfield (OH)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Suffolk Co. (NY)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Sun Valley (CA)—1 incident resulting in 1 death.  
Superior (WI)—1 incident resulting in 1 non-lethal act.  
Tacoma (WA)—4 separate incidents resulting in 4 non-lethal acts.  
Tampa (FL)—2 separate incidents resulting in 2 non-lethal acts.  
Toledo (OH)—6 separate incidents resulting in 6 deaths.

Tucson (AZ)—*2 separate incidents resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.*  
Ventura (CA)—*1 incident resulting in 1 death.*  
Westminster (CA)—*1 incident resulting in 1 death.*

## States where hate crimes/violence occurred from 1999 – 2002

Alaska—3 separate incidents in 1 city (Anchorage) resulting in 2 deaths and 1 non-lethal act.

Arizona—2 separate incidents in 1 city (Tucson) resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.

Arkansas—1 separate incident in 1 city (Monticello) resulting in 1 death.

California—32 separate incidents in 18 cities: Baypoint (1), Berkeley (1), Eureka (1), El Sobrante (1), Hayward (1), Inglewood (1), Los Angeles (3), Modesto (2), Sacramento (2), San Diego (5), San Francisco (2), San Jose (1), San Luis Obispo (1), Santa Ana (2), Santa Cruz (6), Sun Valley (1), Ventura (1), Westminster (1) resulting in 20 deaths and 15 non-lethal acts.

Colorado—13 separate incidents in 2 cities, Colorado Springs (4), Denver (9) resulting in 11 deaths and 4 non-lethal acts.

Connecticut—3 separate incidents in 2 cities: Hartford (2), New Britain (1) resulting in 2 deaths and 2 non-lethal acts.

Florida—11 separate incidents in 8 cities: Charlotte Co. (1), Ft. Lauderdale (1), Gainesville (1), Kissimmee (1), Hollywood (1), Miami (2), Sarasota (2), Tampa (2) resulting in 4 deaths and 7 non-lethal acts.

Hawaii—2 separate incidents in 2 cities: Honolulu (1), Hilo (1) resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.

Illinois—11 separate incidents in 6 cities: Aurora (1), Bloomington (1), Champaign (1), Chicago (5), Elgin (1), Peoria (2) resulting in 6 deaths and 5 non-lethal acts.

Indiana—1 incident in 1 city (Jeffersonville) resulting in 3 deaths.

Kansas—2 separate incidents in 2 cities: Kansas City (1), Lawrence (1) resulting in 2 deaths.

Kentucky—2 separate incidents in 2 cities: Covington (1), Louisville (1) resulting in 3 non-lethal acts.

Louisiana—1 separate incident in 1 city (Livingston) resulting in 1 death.

Maine—1 separate incident in 1 city (Portland) resulting in 1 death.

Maryland—4 separate incidents in 2 cities: Baltimore (3), Hyattsville (1) resulting in 3 deaths and 1 non-lethal act.

Massachusetts—2 separate incidents in 1 city (Cambridge) resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.

Michigan—2 separate incidents in 2 cities: Burton (1), Detroit (1) resulting in 2 deaths and 1 non-lethal act.

Missouri—4 separate incidents in 1 city (Kansas City) resulting in 4 deaths.

Nebraska—2 separate incidents in 2 cities: Filley (1), Omaha (1) resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.

Nevada—14 separate incidents in 2 cities: Las Vegas (13), Reno (1) resulting in 5 deaths and 9 non-lethal acts.

New Jersey—2 separate incidents in 2 cities: Passaic (1), Paterson (1) resulting in 2 deaths.

New Mexico—1 separate incident in 1 city (Santa Fe) resulting in 1 non-lethal act.

New York—13 separate incidents in 3 cities: Albany (4), New York City (8), Suffolk Co. (1) resulting in 5 deaths and 8 non-lethal acts.

North Carolina—5 separate incidents in 2 cities: Fayetteville (1), Raleigh (4) resulting in 2 deaths and 3 non-lethal acts.

Ohio—11 separate incidents in 5 cities: Cincinnati (2), Cleveland (1), Hamilton (1), Toledo (6), Springfield (1) resulting in 8 deaths and 4 non-lethal acts.

Oregon—4 separate incidents in 1 city (Portland) resulting in 4 deaths.

Pennsylvania—3 separate incidents in 3 cities: Norristown (1), Philadelphia (1), Pittsburgh (1) resulting in 3 deaths.

Puerto Rico—4 separate incidents in 3 cities: Bayamon (1), San Juan (2), Santurce (1) resulting in 7 non-lethal acts.

South Dakota—9 separate incidents in 2 cities: Rapid City (8), Sioux Falls (1) resulting in 8 deaths and 1 non-lethal act.

Tennessee—1 separate incident in 1 city (Memphis) resulting in 1 non-lethal act.

Texas—11 separate incidents in 5 cities: Austin (2), Dallas (2), Fort Worth (3), Galveston (2), Houston (1) resulting in 7 deaths and 4 non-lethal acts.

Virginia—4 separate incidents in 4 cities: Arlington (1), Dale City (1), Fredericksburg (1), Richmond (1) resulting in 3 deaths and 1 non-lethal act.

Washington—13 separate incidents in 5 cities: Bremerton (1), Kent (2), Seattle (4), Spokane (2), Tacoma (4) resulting in 8 deaths and 5 non-lethal acts.

West Virginia—1 separate in 1 city (Huntington) resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.

Wisconsin—2 separate incidents in 2 cities: Milwaukee (1), Superior (1) resulting in 1 death and 1 non-lethal act.

The following accounts are examples of the brutality that people experiencing homelessness have faced. These accounts are taken from NCH's annual hate crime/violence reports. The individual reports include all of the hate crime/violence accounts and can be found on NCH's website: <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/> under the publications link.

### **SEVEN HOMELESS MEN KILLED IN DENVER**

Seven homeless men have been found dead in Denver in the trendy Lower Downtown district. Two were beheaded. All of the men were beaten to death, one so savagely that his skull was in pieces. And at least two others were severely beaten.

The most persistent street rumor is that a pack of young men is picking on homeless people for sick thrills. In the only case so far with a witness, someone told the police that several juvenile male suspects were seen beating a homeless man in a downtown alley in early September.

They "may get a sort of high or thrill by beating up people, and homeless are such an easy target," said Police Lt. Judith Will. "It's sad and tragic."

John Parvensky, director of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, said, "It is just as important to find and bring the killers to justice as it is to find the murderer of Jon-Benet Ramsey."  
*Denver Colorado: Fall of 1999*

### **HOMELESS MAN KIDNAPPED AND ATTACKED**

Two men kidnapped Tommy Council, a homeless man. They tied him up and poured battery acid on his genitals while they threatened to kill him with the drop cord they had tied around his neck. One of the men, Leroy Thaggard, Jr., is in jail with \$150,000 bail, but the other is still at large.  
*Fayetteville, North Carolina, November 2000*

### **HIT-AND-RUN VICTIM LIVED FOR TWO DAYS WHILE TRAPPED IN WINDSHIELD**

In early March of 2002, police learned that Gregory Glenn Biggs lived for two or three days after he was hit, lying on a car hood in a southeast Fort Worth garage, his body trapped in the windshield. Despite Biggs' pleas, police said the driver refused to help and left him to die. Afterward, the body was dumped in the park.

The medical examiner's office told police that Biggs suffered no internal injuries and apparently died from loss of blood and shock. Records listed Biggs' address as a homeless shelter.

"I'm going to have to come up with a new word. Indifferent isn't enough. Cruel isn't enough to say. Heartless? Inhumane? Maybe we've just redefined inhumanity here," said Richard Alpert, a Tarrant County assistant district attorney.  
*Fort Worth Texas, October 2001*

### **HOMELESS MAN DIES AFTER HE BEING SET ON FIRE**

After eight days of pain, Dennis R. Wade, 47, died due to third-degree burns. Sleeping on the porch of an abandoned house, Wade was set on fire and suffered from burns over 80% of his body. Reportedly, Wade told paramedics at the scene, "I can't believe they set me on fire." Despite Wade's initial stability, his brother reported, "He has no skin. The damage is done. He is not going to make it."  
*Springfield Ohio, August 2002*

# Hate, Violence, and Death on Main Street USA:

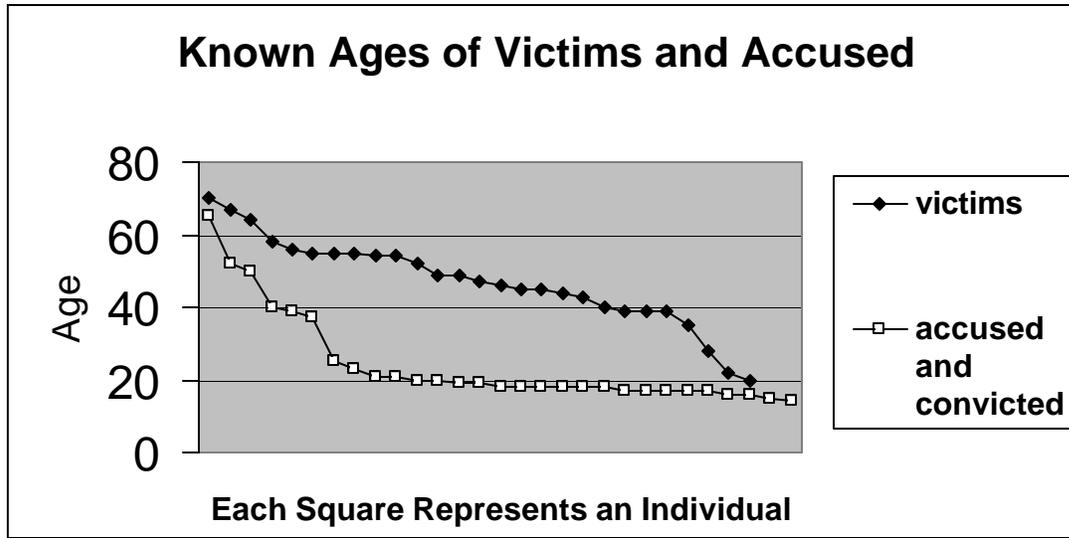
A Report on Hate Crimes  
And Violence Against  
People Experiencing Homelessness  
2002

# Summary of hate crimes and violence data

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**Total number of deaths: 16**

**Total number of victims who suffered from non-lethal violence: 21**



**Known ages of the accused and convicted:**

65, 52, 50, 40, 39, 37, 25, 23, 21 (two), 20 (two), 19 (two), 18 (six), 17 (seven), 16 (three), 15 (two), and 14

**Known ages of the victims:**

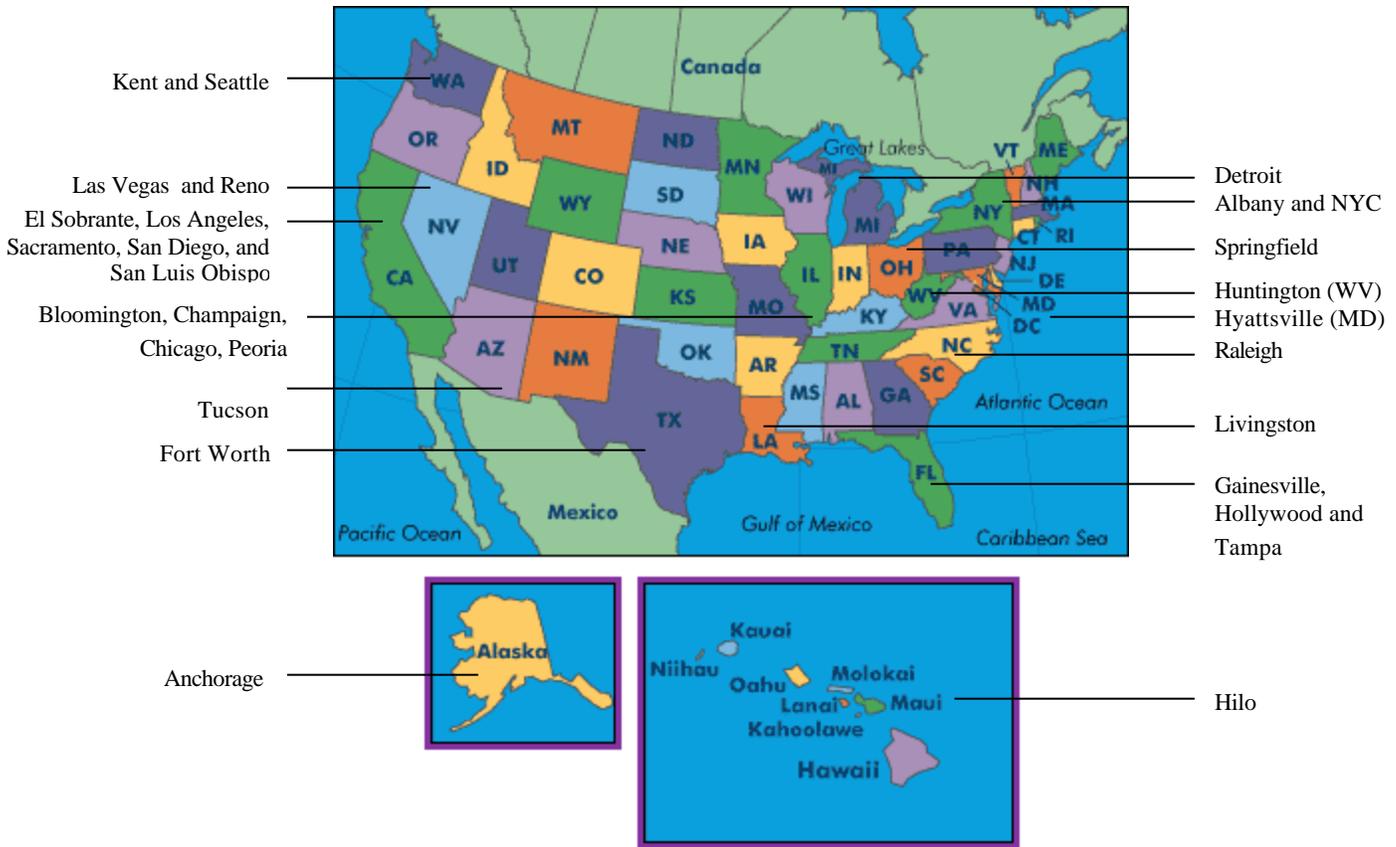
70, 67, 64, 58, 56, 55 (four), 54 (two), 52, 49 (two), 47, 46, 45 (two), 44, 43, 40, 39 (three), 35, 28, 22 and 20

**Gender of victims:**

Male: 34

Female: 2

# Cities and States in which hate and violent crimes occurred in 2002



## *Cities where crimes occurred:*

- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Albany, New York          | Las Vegas, Nevada           |
| Anchorage, Alaska         | Livingston, Louisiana       |
| Bloomington, Illinois     | Los Angeles, California     |
| Champaign, Illinois       | New York, New York          |
| Chicago, Illinois         | Peoria, Illinois            |
| Detroit, Michigan         | Raleigh, North Carolina     |
| El Sobrante, California   | Reno, Nevada                |
| Elgin, Illinois           | Sacramento, California      |
| Fort Worth, Texas         | San Diego, California       |
| Gainesville, Florida      | San Luis Obispo, California |
| Hilo, Hawaii              | Seattle, Washington         |
| Hollywood, Florida        | Springfield, Ohio           |
| Huntington, West Virginia | Tampa, Florida              |
| Hyattsville, Maryland     | Tucson, Arizona             |
| Kent, Washington          |                             |

# Recommendations For Action

The National Coalition for the Homeless recommends that the following actions be taken:

1. A public statement by the U.S. Department of Justice acknowledging that hate crimes and/or violence against people experiencing homelessness is a serious national trend.
2. A database to be maintained by the U.S. Department of Justice, in cooperation with the National Coalition for the Homeless, to track hate crimes and/or violence against people who become homeless.
3. Inclusion of housing status in the pending federal hate crimes legislation.
4. Sensitivity/Awareness training at police academies and departments nationwide for trainees and police officers on how to deal effectively and humanely with people who become homeless in their communities.
5. A General Accounting Office (GAO) investigation into the nature and scope of hate crimes and/or violent acts and crimes that occur against people experiencing homelessness. This proposed study will address the following: causes of hate crimes/violence; circumstances that contribute to or were responsible for the perpetrators' behavior, beliefs held by the perpetrators of these crimes and how their beliefs have changed since conviction, thoughts and advice from the perpetrators to others who are considering hate crimes/violence against the homeless population; and community education, prevention and law enforcement strategies.

# Case descriptions

## By month and city

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### January

#### **Hyattsville, Maryland**

##### ***Two Maryland Police Officers Indicted***

Two police officers, Cpl. James C. Partenza and Cpl. Mark Elie, were indicted for beating and unleashing a dog on a homeless man. Hector Millan, 28, allegedly broke into a gas station and was consequently arrested; however, a third officer told his supervisors that despite claims that Millan protested and fought against his arrest, brute force was employed by the police officers without justification.

When the police officers found him, Millan raised his arms to surrender, but Partenza struck the homeless man's head with his baton and Elie unleashed the dog.

Millan said the dog bit his ankle and one arm, and showed a scar on his head that he said was caused by the officer's baton.

Partenza and Eli are both charged with first-degree and second-degree assault, reckless endangerment and misconduct in the office.

### February

#### **Chicago, Illinois**

##### ***Homeless Man Beaten To Death—Caught On Videotape***

Hidden in the shadows, Floyd Mummert, 64, was brutally beaten to death as he lay asleep in a lobby of a building on West Wacker Drive. The morning security guard noticed that Mummert, a regular in the area, did not appear to be moving or breathing. The guard checked Mummert and found his dead body lying in blood. A surveillance video captured the killing on tape, which revealed a man entering the lobby in the very early morning hours of February 10, 2002. On tape, the man is shown looking around the lobby, holding an object in his hand.

Law enforcement officials and Mummert's family called the killing ruthless. "We're hoping justice is done...that they find the person who did this," said his step-mother.

His step-mother described her son as “an avid reader and passionate about baseball, often spent afternoons with his nephews playing ball in his parents’ back yard.” He spent two years in the U.S. Army.

### **Reno, Nevada**

#### ***Man Pleads Guilty In Homeless Beating***

Asleep in an abandoned trailer, Jeffrey Haraughty, 39, was asleep when Michael Williams, 23, beat the sleeping man to death with a 2-by-4. Haraughty worked at a local restaurant and when he did not come to work for several days, the manager went to the trailer in search of him.

*“Police said Haraughty was popular in the neighborhood and news of his death saddened business owners and other homeless people alike.”*

Williams was visiting a friend, Mark Warren, who owned the property where the trailer was parked. “Warren has complained to Williams about ‘these bums’ who were living on his land.” After a night of drinking, Williams just went to Haraughty’s trailer and started “whaling on this guy’s head” with the wooden board. The many blows crushed the victim’s skull.

Williams pleaded guilty to murder. According to his public defender, Erik Nickel, “He’s very remorseful. He knows he got out of hand, and he doesn’t know why. He wanted to take responsibility for it.” As Judge Jerry Polaha noted, “This was human being who was sleeping and you took away his life in a brutal fashion. And that deserves a life term.”

Williams was sentenced to life in prison.

### **Sacramento, California**

#### ***Homeless Man Killed And Another Wounded By A Man In A Trench Coat***

Sleeping, Kenneth Massie, in his 50s, was shot and killed next to his dear friend, Victor Mullin, 54, who was also shot, but survived. The masked gunman, an unknown

*A Loaves and Fishes staff member said, “Friends said he preferred Louis L’Amour novels and ramen to drinking or drugs.”*

suspect about 6 feet tall dressed in a dark trench coat or rain jacket, walked past the campsite on a levee and quickly fired several rounds from his pistol.

Supporters and friends described Massie as “a homeless man who defied the stereotype. People were devastated that anyone would hurt him. They all ask: ‘Why Kenneth?’ He would fetch food for newcomers too shy to seek out breakfast.”

Tim Brown, executive director of Loaves and Fishes, said the shooting is a result of a worsening economy and harsh words against homeless people on radio talk shows.

## March

### **El Sobrante, California**

#### ***Police Hold Son In Slaying Of Homeless Houseguests***

Carlos Stewart, 21, the son of an El Sobrante woman who offered Rafael Chavez, 55, shelter, killed him. During the spring months, Chavez painted houses in the area and one day knocked on the door of Stewart's mother, Sheila Bush. He explained that he was homeless and in turn, Bush offered Chavez a place to stay if he would help with chores and painting.

After living with Bush for two months, Chavez was forced out because Stewart "didn't want him around." Chavez was found bludgeoned to death. Despite the son's denial that he hit or killed the homeless man, Stewart is being held by the police. The police indicated that Stewart did call his brother in an attempt to dispose of the body.

## April

### **Albany, New York**

#### ***Death Of Homeless Man Ruled A Homicide***

Killed by blunt trauma to the head, Christopher Nieckarz, 39, was found on Grand Street. Nieckarz lived on the streets of Albany, but occasionally stayed with friends, at missions or shelters. The night he was attacked, Nieckarz stopped at a friend's house and explained that he had been "jumped." His friend provided him shelter for the evening, but in the morning Nieckarz was found unconscious.

*Nieckarz's father said, "[He] was an alcoholic, and, at the time of his death he was a homeless man. But he certainly had a family who loved him and they were always glad to see him."*

David Cright, 19, pleaded guilty for the murder of Nieckarz. Cright told police that he had gotten into a fight with the homeless man, but claims that he only hit the man only once in the head. Cright was consequently sentenced to only six months in jail and five years' probation despite the Nieckarz family's request for a harsher sentence.

### **New York, New York**

#### ***Youths Set Homeless Man On Fire***

A homeless man was treated for burns on his arms and back after he was set on fire by four or five youths in a Bronx apartment building.

## **Seattle, Washington**

### ***Suspects In Beating Death Sought; Man Assaulted After Argument On Bus***

Both an advocate and a homeless man, Nicholas Helhowski, 22, died as a result of a brutal beating following a verbal argument on a Metro bus. According to witnesses, following the disagreement, Helhowski and his girlfriend got off the bus and were followed by a group of young men. After yet another argument, Helhowski was repeatedly hit on the head until he fell unconscious to the ground.

As an advocate, Helhowski worked for the organization, Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets (PSKS), which promotes responsibility and organization among homeless young people.

Duane Fish, spokesperson for the Seattle police, said youths on the streets nicknamed him “Rooster,” probably because of his spiky Mohawk hairdo and because he spoke out and stood up for a lot of them.

June

## **Hollywood, Florida**

### ***Homeless Man Beaten To Death And Consequently Robbed***

Frankie Erbe, a homeless man, was attacked in the middle of the afternoon. Erbe, 49, lay motionless and bloodied with his pockets emptied. Working for a local motel owner as a parking-lot attendant, Erbe collected money from the motel’s patrons. When he was attacked, he had several hundred dollars in his pocket—but following the incident, all was stolen and he was dead.

*Sullivan, a fellow employee, said, ‘It hurt, it still does. He [Erbe] was a good friend.’*

Jerry Sullivan, a friend, said Erbe spoke little of his life, but told Sullivan he had served in the military and had witnessed the death of his wife and children in a car accident.

## **Raleigh, North Carolina**

### ***Durham Man Convicted Of Rape Of Homeless Woman***

Mackson Brodie, 50, who has a history of “preying on drug-addicted, homeless women” was found guilty of first-degree kidnapping and first-degree rape in the assault of a 35 year-old woman. Sentenced to at least 32 years in prison, Brodie cannot be released from prison until he is at least 82.

## July

### **Anchorage, AK**

#### ***Youth Burn Homeless Man With Sparklers***

Over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend, a group of young men burned a homeless man with sparklers.

### **Elgin, Illinois**

#### ***Homeless Man Found Beaten In Park***

Responding to a call at 11:30p.m., Elgin police found a homeless man lying on the ground in Festival Park where he had been severely beaten. The man said that he was attacked by four males, but he did not know who they were or why they attacked him. Paramedics were called and they stated that he had a possible broken jaw as a result of the attack, but he refused to be aided.

### **Fort Worth, Texas**

#### ***Group Stomps Homeless Man To Death—Onlookers Refuse To Help***

A group of men stomped to death Donald Watkins, a 39-year-old homeless man. Watkins was apparently drinking outside of the Ripley Arnold Apartment Complex when he and another man started arguing. As Sgt. David Stamp explained, “Apparently after the initial assault, our victim was knocked to the ground, becoming disabled. For some unknown reason, several of the others standing by joined in the assault. Apparently it was a mob mentality.” As others watched, Watkins head was stomped, kicked and smashed—he was

*Sgt. Dave Stamp said, “This is not your typical homicide. It’s sad that apparently there were people there who could have intervened and chose not to. Hopefully our investigation will determine why.”*

left unconscious and lying in a pool of his own blood until the police arrived.

A week following the attack, Demarcus J. Williams, 18, was arrested as a member of the group

that killed Watkins. “He [Williams] was identified as being a primary assailant, and he was seen stomping and kicking the victim in the head.”

### **Hilo, Hawaii**

#### ***Puna Man Convicted In Hilo Incident***

Steven Willis, age 18, was charged with assault of Daaiichi Kamei, a 67-year-old homeless man. Willis approached Kamei and tried to gain his confidence by pointing to a non-existent centipede. Kamei looked in that direction “When he [turned] back, Mr. Willis [was] waiting for him with a punch to the forehead,” said the prosecutor who also described the behavior as “appalling and unacceptable.” The attack was videotaped by one of Willis’ friends. He was sentenced to one year in jail and five years of probation on the condition that he enter a demanding drug treatment program

## Huntington, West Virginia

### *Gerald King, Jr. Beaten To Death In The Riverbank Camp He Loved As His Home*

Gerald King, Jr., 52, was beaten to death with hands, fists, feet, sticks by three young men on the banks of the Ohio River. Jarrett Roscoe Bailey, 19, Michael Day, 17, and a 16 year-old juvenile brutally attacked King. Friends of King sensed trouble the night of his murder, when the three men passed through King's campsite. A fellow homeless man, Kenny Segrest explained, "The teenagers claimed they were going fishing, but none of them had fishing poles. One of the teenagers threw a beer bottle over the hill, and King told them not to litter because this was his home. They [the teenagers] called him a bum and got up in his face and asked him what he was going to do about it."

*King's former wife said, "He [King] was a very intelligent, smart and creative man. He had so much potential."*

Although the teenagers left the site, they soon returned to attack King and a fellow homeless man, William Porter. A good friend, Jason Scarberry, found King's body near his home of 20 years surrounded by a "picnic table, a campfire pit, mailbox, makeshift coat rack, crates filled with cooking utensils, and an American flag." Scarberry said, "Somebody killed him just to be mean."

The three men were indicted in January 2003 with first-degree murder and malicious wounding. Bailey and Day are both being charged as adults. Day is scheduled to go on trial in April of 2003. and the juvenile is still awaiting news whether he will be transferred to adult status. Cabell County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Brent Walters stated, "Anytime there's a crime dealing with deadly violence, we're always going to look at trying juveniles as adults. Especially if they are over the age of 14."

Born in 1950, King grew up in Huntington and spent much of his life in the area. A husband and a father of two girls, he loved the outdoors from childhood. Darlene Carter, King's wife and mother of his children said, "Even though he had a roof over his head, he would go to the riverbank and left for weeks at a time. He would catch fish and run back to the house and tell us that he had dinner ready for us. When we would go down there, he would sweep and rake the riverbank until it looked like a beach on the Florida coast." King entered the Air Force with a desire to continue supporting his family. He received an honorable discharge. However, his wife and daughters left him and he soon turned to alcohol. "His nerves got real bad, so he started drinking. He never put the bottle down after that," said his wife. In turn, he lived outdoors and chose to be homeless despite pleas from his family and friends.

*As Kim King said, "He was devastated. He just loved his wife and kids so much, that he couldn't deal with anything else."*

The arrest of the three men was fast and efficient—Police Captain Steven Hall explained, public outrage and information offered coupled with fine detective work lead to the arrests. “We appreciate it, and so do the other people who continue to live on the street despite the danger and difficulty.”

### **Kent, Washington**

#### ***Three Teenagers Charged With Murdering Homeless Woman***

Kelly Rhae Craft, 44, was found dead in a parking lot following a brutal attack by three South King County teenagers. Jesse Morgan, 18, Lamont Caw, 17 and Shaddie Graham, 17, were hanging out nearby when they started to discuss a crack-cocaine deal with the homeless woman. Morgan stated that he had never met the woman and was defensive when she reached for his pocket. In turn, he started to slap and punch her—suddenly all three men were kicking and hitting her.

*“Dennis LaFarlette said he couldn’t understand why anyone would want to kill ‘a downtrodden and defenseless, homeless woman’ who loved music and wildlife.”*

Witnesses say Morgan persuaded Graham to go with him to the parking lot and they were later “amped up” and “high-fivin” each other boasting about beating someone up.

Craft grew up in Jackson, Mississippi. She had a degree in biology and served in the U.S. Coast Guard. In touch with her nephew and sister, Dennis and Marilyn LaFarlette, she was known to live with friends in the Seattle area. Although unsure of the exact reason for Craft’s homelessness, both said that she became severely depressed after her mother died several years before. LaFarlette said, “It’s inconceivable that anyone could do something like that.”

All three men were charged with second-degree murder; however, Caw pleaded guilty and faces only a year in jail in return for his testimony against Morgan and Graham. Both Morgan and Graham pleaded not guilty and both could face 10-18 years in jail.

### **Livingston, Louisiana**

#### ***Jury Indicts Teen As Adult In Slaying***

A grand jury indicted Wesley Pitre, 16, for the strangulation death of Joseph F. Trahan, 40. Trahan was invited to stay in the home of Pitre’s mother. Pitre admitted to the police that he tied up Trahan, strangled him with the sash of a robe in the early morning hours of July 8. Pitre explained to detectives that he returned to sleep, but awoke at noon and attempted to dismember Trahan’s body with a handsaw “with the plan of hiding the severed pieces in a trash bin.” Instead, Pitre’s mother found the body in her son’s bedroom and then called police. If he is convicted as an adult for second-degree murder, Pitre could face an automatic life sentence without the possibility of parole.

## **Peoria, Illinois**

### ***Homeless Man Beaten In Early Morning Attack***

A 20-year-old homeless man told police that he was “jumped, beaten and robbed of \$1 early Saturday morning.” The incident occurred at 2:35 a.m. and involved several offenders.

## **Tucson, Arizona**

### ***Paintball Assault***

A 55-year-old homeless man was struck by paintballs as he slept on the street. As a result of the assault, he was treated for several welts on his arms and legs.

## *August*

## **Champaign, Illinois**

### ***Four Teens Strangle and Beat a Homeless Man to Death***

Robert James Nash, 55, was attacked in a north Champaign park where he was intending to spend the night on or about August 8. A couple found his body the morning of August 8. The doctor who performed the autopsy stated that Nash had been struck on his head and chest about 20 to 25 times. He had also been strangled. Nash had suffered from bleeding and bruising in the brain, six fractured ribs, a broken sternum, and five teeth were knocked out.

The police had no leads on the case until a mysterious letter arrived stating that four teenagers had committed the crime. The letter listed Nathaniel White, 16, Ricky King Jr., 15, Corinthian Howard, 17, and Kortel Burks, 17. White gave a statement that he and the other boys were walking in the park when Mr. Nash approached them mumbling and with his hand in his pocket. White then cursed at him and punched him in the face, knocking him to the ground, he then began kicking him. White said he believed that Mr. Nash had a knife, but he conceded to police that when Nash fell to the ground he could see he didn't have a knife. The three other boys joined in with kicking and stomping on Mr. Nash. The boys claim to have left Mr. Nash alive. Mr. Nash had a sister and cousin in the area who he occasionally stayed with, they testified at the trials of the boys. David Nash, Mr. Nash's youngest son, was also present at the trial. Mr. Nash raised his three sons on his own.

“When they took him away from me, it seemed they took God from me.” said David Nash at the murder trial of his father.

White was tried as an adult and convicted of murder on March 13. He is awaiting sentencing, which could be 20 to 60 years. Howard pleaded guilty to first-degree murder and was sentenced to 20 years in prison, prosecutors said he will serve the entire sentence. The other two are awaiting trial.

## **Las Vegas, Nevada**

### ***Retiree Tries To Run Down A Homeless Man For Going To The Bathroom In Public***

Al Gallego, 65, was initially charged with felony assault with a deadly weapon after he used his truck to “scare” a homeless man. Attempting vigilante justice, Gallego decided to “teach” the homeless man a lesson about public defecation. “When Gallego turned the corner, he said he saw the man against a wall with his pants down, attempting to defecate. Enraged, he stepped on the gas and drove to within 3 feet of the vagrant, who Gallego said pulled up his pants and tried unsuccessfully to scale the wall behind him.”

With the homeless man pinned against the wall, Gallego called the police and insisted that they hurry, otherwise he was going to “smash the guy up against the wall with his truck.” Police arrived and found the homeless man with only minor bruises on his arms, and immediately arrested Gallego for the assault; however, Gallego, a well-known active citizen, was released from jail soon after. As a result, Gallego was not officially charged and the investigation was dropped.

## **Los Angeles, California**

### ***Bus Driver Accused Of Running Over And Killing A Homeless Man***

Cruz Vaca, 39, was arrested for running over a homeless man with his bus. Driving east through the Koreatown district, the homeless man tried to get on the bus, but Vaca refused to allow him to board. “Police said that the homeless man two weeks ago had been kicked off Vaca’s bus, and that he had spit on the driver.”

Determined to board the bus, the homeless man stood next to the bus, and banged against the door. Witnesses stated that Vaca turned and said, through the door of the bus, “You are not going to get on my bus.” Then, the homeless man stood in front of the bus; however, Vaca allegedly claimed not to see the man in front of the bus and ran over him.

“Passengers could hear and feel several thumps as the bus began moving,” a bus passenger said. “After yelling at the driver to stop, passengers ran out to see what happened and found the man lying under the bus near the rear wheels, his pants nearly torn off. The homeless man was unresponsive and appeared to be dead.”

Vaca faces up to six years in state prison if convicted.

## **Springfield, Ohio**

### ***Homeless Man Killed After He Was Set On Fire***

After eight days of pain, Dennis R. Wade, 47, died due to third-degree burns. Sleeping on the porch of an abandoned house, Wade was set on fire and suffered from burns over 80% of his body.

Reportedly, Wade told paramedics at the scene, “I can’t believe they set me on fire.”

Springfield Police Chief David Walters stated that he believed Wade was first doused with gasoline or lighter fluid, and then set ablaze. Despite Wade's initial stability, his brother reported, "He has no skin. The damage is done. He is not going to make it."

The Springfield police were treating the incident as a homicide.

## September

### **New York City, New York**

#### ***Man Arrested in Fatal Shooting of a Homeless Man in Queens***

Vadim V. Traut, a 52-year-old electrical engineer, walked into a wooded area in Queens frequented by homeless people, pulled a shotgun from his trench coat and shot a man to death.

Police said that Traut entered the wooded area and confronted two men and a woman. An argument broke out, and Traut fired a single round from a shotgun hitting Kevin Monroe, 46. Mr. Monroe, who was homeless, died at the scene, but the woman and the other man escaped. It was unclear if Mr. Monroe was the intended target.

Traut had recently left his job at a meat processing company in Queens, said investigators, who said he had also recently been divorced.

Traut has denied any involvement in the shooting. He faces second-degree murder charges.

### **Raleigh, North Carolina**

#### ***Police Report That Stun Gun Was Used In Beating***

Five men were sought in association with the beating of a homeless man. Hardy Gilbert, 54, who was brought to a hospital for treatment for his arm (broken in four places) and eye. Four men have been charged with assault with a deadly weapon: Justin Todd Perry, 21, Blake Anders Schlukdler, 20, Skip Ashley Smith, 20, and Mark Canter Brantley, 18. Gilbert was sleeping in the hallway of Smith and Schlukdler's apartment building when he was brutally beaten. "Gilbert told police some young men at the apartment building 'just came out and started beating on him,' according to the Raleigh police captain, D.S. Overman. When police searched the home, they found two pairs of brass knuckles, a collapsible baton and a stun gun."

## October

### **Gainesville, Florida**

#### ***Homeless Man Robbed And Beaten***

A homeless man was beaten and robbed of his wallet by four men on Banks Street. The men were seen leaving in a brown car.

### **New York, New York**

#### ***Homeless Man Set On Fire In Hallway***

Police are searching for a Brooklyn teenager, 15, who allegedly set fire to Silvester Williams, a 58-year-old homeless man, as he slept in the hallway of a housing project in East New York City. The man suffered third degree burns on his back and side. Police said that two older teens, who were not with the suspect, may have doused the flames.

### **San Diego, California**

#### ***Navy Men Pelt Paintballs At Homeless People***

Police arrested three Navy enlisted men in connection with paintballs being pelted at homeless people.

### **San Luis Obispo, California**

#### ***Assailants Attack, Cut, Kick And Beat A Homeless Man***

On Halloween night, Vance Lybrand, a 49-year-old homeless man, was attacked and severely beaten by three teenagers. Sleeping in a plywood shelter on Archer Street, the three teens, Chanda Miller, 18, her boyfriend, James Gardner, 18 and an unidentified youth savagely kicked and hit him with a “spiked bracelet, metal pipe, a 2-by-4, and a roll of duct tape.” Suffering injuries that included “a severed finger, a broken clavicle, several facial lacerations, broken ribs and a punctured lung,” Lybrand regained consciousness the following morning and walked to a nearby restaurant for help. He was taken immediately to receive medical attention and to speak with police.

After receiving Lybrand’s description, the police looked for Miller because she was known to “be an associate” of Gardner, the man who fit the immediate description. Gardner, soon arrested, told the police that the attack was in self-defense and to “teach Lybrand a lesson.” Previously, Gardner and Miller had harassed and fought with Lybrand. The evening of the assault, Gardner had been drinking a lot and started to smoke marijuana. Lybrand allegedly came after Gardner with a hammer and at that point Gardner “started giving him [Lybrand] a booty party to the head.” Gardner managed to knock Lybrand down and then enlisted the other two in the beating; the unidentified youth attacked using a piece of plywood and Miller hit the victim with her spiked bracelet. In addition, every time Lybrand was completely sprawled across the pavement, Gardner would climb a chain-link fence and jump down on top of Lybrand.

Despite one attempt to bite the leg of Gardner, Lybrand did not attempt to fight back. Finally, the assailants left the scene; however, within hours they came back to see if Lybrand was still alive. Instead of offering help to the injured man, they began beating him again and stealing \$50 from Lybrand's wallet.

### **Tampa, Florida**

#### ***Homeless Man Attacked; Suspect In Custody***

An unidentified homeless man was beaten, and then the same man who stole his tattered duffle bag slit his throat. Police have arrested Lafayette Murphy, 37, and have charged him with attempted murder and armed robbery.

The victim remained in guarded condition after surgery.

### **Tampa, Florida**

#### ***Officer Shoots Homeless Man Wielding A Putty Knife***

Luis Rafael Objio, a 45 year-old homeless man, was not armed unless a small putty knife is considered a weapon.

Officer Greg Caulley, 40, didn't know for sure what it was, authorities have said, but it was enough to make Caulley fear for his safety when Objio reared back to hurl it at him.

The officer fired three rounds. One hit Objio's stomach; another hit his thigh. Objio will recover. At least two witnesses say they pleaded with the officer not to shoot Objio. Both said they were acquaintances of the homeless man—that he was mentally disabled and generally harmless.

Nora Melton, a local grocery store owner who witnessed the incident, said the shooting was an example of excessive police force. "Rafael wouldn't bother nobody," she said. "I saw the cop gesturing toward him and aggravating him."

## November

### **Bloomington, Illinois**

#### ***Brick Beating Yields Prison Time***

On November 9, 2002, Damen Gillespie, 17, and a 14-year-old juvenile, beat and attacked Russell Koonce, 43, until he fell unconscious. Koonce, a homeless man, was invited for a dinner-meal. Laying unconscious on the back porch of Gillespie's apartment, Koonce was severely assaulted by both men with the legs of a chair and bricks—he was missing a part of his ear and was found bleeding from his many wounds nearly 10 hours following the attack. He testified that he suffered from ensuing dizziness and loss of memory, and in addition, was unable to satisfactorily hear. Following the brutal, mob-like attack, the juvenile poked a stick at Koonce to determine if he was still

alive. “The victim’s presence today is a testament to the miracle of modern medicine,” reported the judge.

Bloomington police detective, Matthew Dick, said the 14-year-old initially denied involvement, but later admitted throwing four or five bricks at Koonce.

*A McLean County judge stated, “[The crime was] a cold and callous disregard for the sanctity of life. In summary, some crimes demand harsh and serious punishment—this is one of them.”*

Both juveniles were charged. One is currently serving an indefinite term in juvenile prison, and Gillespie, automatically charged as an adult, is awaiting trial.

### **Detroit, Michigan**

#### ***Homeless Man Killed, And Another Wounded For Begging***

A suburban firefighter and his friend are suspects in the shootings of two homeless men (ages 70 and 45 years of age), who were begging on the street. One died and the other was wounded. Police say the two white men left a bar and apparently began to argue with the two black homeless men. Racial slurs were directed at the two homeless men. One of the white men ended up producing a handgun.

Police say that since racial slurs were allegedly used, the suspects could be charged with more than just murder.

### **New York, New York**

#### ***Homeless Man Set On Fire As He Slept On Subway***

Two Manhattan men, ages 17 and 25, were arrested for allegedly setting Gerald Omaro, 56, a homeless man, on fire as he slept on the subway. Police say the two men boarded the E train in Queens and set fire to the man’s coat. The fire left burns on the man’s arms.

**Please personalize this letter to your U.S. Representative and your two U.S. Senators. If possible we encourage you to handwrite this letter and include any personal stories that are relevant. Please send a copy of any letter and response you receive to Michael Stoops at the National Coalition for the Homeless at [mstoops@nationalhomeless.org](mailto:mstoops@nationalhomeless.org).**

*Date*

The Honorable *[insert full name]*  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable *[insert full name]*  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator/Representative *[insert full name]*,

I am requesting your assistance in seeking a U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) investigation into the nature and scope of violent acts and hate crimes against people experiencing homelessness. The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) is supported in this request by over 400 organizations, including the National League of Cities, National Organization of Women (NOW), and Volunteers of America.

Throughout the nation, people experiencing homelessness, advocates, and service providers report an alarming increase in the number and scope of violent acts against people who lack permanent housing. These accounts include beatings, murders, arson, harassment, and damage of personal property. Homeless men, women, and children around the nation are particularly vulnerable to crimes against them because they represent an easy, visible target and often lack a place to retreat for safety and protection. A GAO investigation would assist Congress and the public in obtaining much-needed information on the extent and scope of violent acts and crimes against people experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, such an investigation would help federal, state, and local officials identify actions that could be taken to prevent and reduce such crimes.

NCH recently released a four-year (1999 – 2002) study that documents hate crimes and violent acts committed against people experiencing homelessness. The full report can be found at <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/>. Between 1999 and 2002 there were 123 deaths and 89 non-lethal attacks representing 98 cities and 34 states and Puerto Rico. The youngest victim was four months old, the oldest was seventy-six years old. *(insert state information if relevant: Such as the ranking for your state or city)* A study by the GAO would aid in protecting one of the most vulnerable populations in our society.

If you would like further information on this critical issue please contact me at:

*Name*

*Address*

*City, State, Zip*

*email*

*Phone Number*

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



## ***A Call to Investigate the Violent Acts and Crimes Committed Against People Experiencing Homelessness***

Over the past several years advocates and homeless shelter workers from around the country have received news reports of men, women and even children being harassed, kicked, set on fire, beaten to death, and even decapitated. Over the last four years alone (1999 through 2002) there have been 212 acts of violence, resulting in 123 deaths of people experiencing homelessness, and 89 victims of non-lethal violence. These incidents took place in 98 different cities from 34 states and Puerto Rico. The perpetrators were housed individuals.

NCH calls on Congress for a General Accounting Office (GAO) investigation into the nature and scope of violent acts and crimes that occur against people experiencing homelessness. People who are forced to live and sleep on the streets for lack of an appropriate alternative are in extremely vulnerable situations. We must ensure protection of civil rights for everyone, regardless of their economic circumstances or housing status. Please take a moment to sign on below.

### *Organizational Endorsement Form*

*(Please Print)*

Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### **Send this form to:**

National Coalition for the Homeless  
1012 14<sup>th</sup> St. NW, Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20005-3471  
Fax: 202.737.6445

Or sign on online at [www.nationalhomeless.org/hatecrimes/signon.html](http://www.nationalhomeless.org/hatecrimes/signon.html)  
phone: (202) 737-6444 ext. 19 • email: [mstoops@nationalhomeless.org](mailto:mstoops@nationalhomeless.org)

**Organizational Endorsements for a GAO Investigation Into Hate  
Crimes/Violence Against People Experiencing Homelessness**

## **National Organizations:**

Alliance for Children and Families  
Americans for Democratic Action  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Health Care for the Homeless Clinicians Network  
Housing Assistance Council  
Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, ELCA  
National AIDS Housing Coalition  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Center for Hate Crime Prevention  
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
National Coalition for Homeless Veterans  
National Coalition for the Homeless  
National Consumer Advisory Board  
National Fair Housing Alliance  
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council  
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty  
National League of Cities  
National Leased Housing Association  
National Low Income Housing Coalition  
National Network for Youth  
National Organization for Women  
National Resource Ctr. on Homelessness & Mental Illness  
Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington Office  
UCC/Ministries for Criminal Justice & Human Rights  
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice  
United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries  
Universal Living Wage Campaign  
Volunteers of America

## Local/State Organizations:

AL Alabama Council on Human Relations  
Birmingham Coalition of the Homeless  
Federation of Southern Coops/Land Assistance Fund  
Mobile Fair Housing Center, Inc.  
Montgomery Community Action Committee, Inc.  
15 Place/Homeless Coalition of the Gulf Coast

AR The Arkansas Hunger Coalition

AZ Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness  
Compass Health Care  
Ecumenical Chaplaincy for the Homeless  
HomeStart  
Primavera Builders, Inc.  
Primavera Foundation

CA Agorua High School/Human Rights Club  
Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency  
California Coalition for Rural Housing  
Capitol City SDA Church  
Central Coast Rescue Mission  
Child Care Voucher Program (Catholic Charities)  
Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County  
County of Mendocino Department of Mental Health  
Emergency Service Network  
Freedom Clothing and Art  
Homeless Empowerment Project West  
Homeless Help  
Housing California  
Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger and Homelessness  
Lutheran Social Services of Southern California  
New Opportunities  
Non-Profit Housing Association of No. California  
Ocean Park Community Center  
Orange County Community Housing Corp.  
Religious Witness with Homeless People  
Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee

Sacramento Loaves & Fishes  
 San Diego Coalition for the Homeless  
 San Diego Youth and Community Services  
 San Francisco Coalition on Homelessness  
 Sonoma County Task Force on the Homeless  
 SRO Housing Corp.  
 Union Station Foundation  
 Windows Support Center

CO Colorado Coalition for the Homeless  
 COMITIS Crisis Center, Inc.  
 Denver Voice  
 Mercy Housing  
 Rocky Mountain Hebrew Academy  
 SPIRIT-Human Services, Inc.

CT AIDS Project New Haven  
 Columbus House Inc.  
 Community Renewal Team  
 CT AIDS Residence Coalition  
 CT Coalition to End Homelessness

DC Action for Peace through Prayer & Aid  
 Change, Inc.  
 Community Council f/t Homeless/Friendship Place  
 Dinner Program for Homeless Women  
 Downtown Cluster of Congregations  
 House of Imogene Shelters  
 So Others Might Eat (SOME)  
 Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless

FL Broward Coalition for the Homeless  
 Catholic Charities  
 Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami Inc  
 Charlotte County Homeless Coalition  
 Charlotte County Public Schools/Youth Project  
 Clara White Mission  
 Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida, Inc.  
 Coalition for the Homeless of Pasco County

Community Coalition on Homelessness  
David Lawrence Center  
Domestic Abuse Shelter Homes, Inc  
Emergency Services & Homeless Coalition/St. John  
Family Resources, Inc  
Florida Coalition for the Homeless  
Florida Impact  
HIS Place Ministries  
Homeless Voice  
Lake Community Action Agency  
Lee County Coalition for the Homeless  
Miami Coalition for the Homeless, Inc.  
Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust  
Office of Justice & Peace, Diocese/St. Augustine  
Punta Gorda Housing Authority  
Recovery House of Central Florida, Inc.  
Salvation Army, Sarasota County  
Southeastern Network of Youth and Family Services  
Stand Up for Kids  
SW Florida Coalition for the Homeless  
Tallahassee Coalition for the Homeless  
The Cooperative Feeding Program  
The Salvation Army, Melbourne, FL Corps.  
USFF, Inc.  
Volusia/Flagler County Coalition for the Homeless  
WIN/Coalition for the Hungry & Homeless of Brevard

GA

Athens Area Homeless Shelter  
Georgia Legal Services  
Georgia Task Force for the Homeless  
Lowndes Associated Ministries to People  
Macon Outreach at Mulberry  
Mercy Services Corporation  
Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless  
NAMI South Cobb  
Northeast Georgia Homeless Coalition

HI                   The Atlanta Union of the Homeless  
                       A.S.I./Ohana Ola O Kahumana  
                       Affordable Housing and Homeless Alliance  
                       Gregory House Programs  
                       Waianae Community Outreach  
 ID                   Terry Reilly Health Services Boise Clinic  
 IL                   Calor/Casa Contreras  
                       Catholic Voices for Economic Justice  
                       Chicago Coalition for the Homeless  
                       Hyde Park & Kenwood Interfaith Council  
                       Illinois Coalition to End Homelessness  
                       Illinois Hunger Coalition  
                       Interfaith House  
                       Lincoln Park Community Shelter  
                       Rafael Center  
                       Southern Illinois Coalition for the Homeless  
                       St. Clair Co. Intergovernmental Grants Department  
                       Statewide Housing Action Coalition  
                       Task Force Against Homelessness  
 IN                   Association of College Unions International  
                       Community Action of Northeast Indiana  
                       Haven House Services, Inc.  
                       Heart House  
                       Indiana Coalition on Housing and Homeless Issues  
                       Michigan City Homeless Shelter  
                       Southern Indiana Housing Initiative  
                       Stepping Stones for Veterans, Inc.  
                       Vincent House, Inc.  
 KS                   Inter-Faith Ministries  
 KY                   Hate Crime Foundation of Louisville  
                       Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky  
                       Kentucky Housing Corporation  
                       St. John Center, Inc.  
                       St. Vincent de Paul  
                       The Coalition for the Homeless, Inc.

LA Centerpoint  
Providence House  
RHD Voyage House  
Unity for the Homeless Advocacy Committee

MA Arise for Social Justice  
Casa Myrna Vazquez  
Catholic Social Services  
Community Action Committee of Cape Cod & Islands  
Consumer Advisory Bd/Boston Health Care f/t Homelessness  
Holy Cross SCOHAH Program  
New England Network  
Outreach Van Project  
Peace at Home  
Safe Harbor  
Solutions at Work  
Springfield School Volunteers, Inc/Homeless Education Project  
Tripp Consulting  
Union of Minority Neighborhoods  
WWM

MD AIDS Interfaith Residential Services  
Arundel House of Hope  
Frederick Community Action Agency  
Happy Helpers for the Homeless  
Health Care for the Homeless  
Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc.  
Washington County Community Action Council

ME Preble Street Resource Center

MI Altrusa Teen SHARE  
Blue Water Center for Independent Living  
Catholic Family Services  
Coalition on Temporary Shelter (COTS)  
Community Capital Development Corporation  
Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries  
Dochas, Inc  
Homeless Action Network of Detroit

Lenawee Emergency & Affordable Housing Corp.  
Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness  
NE Michigan Coal. f/t Prevention of Homelessness  
Open Door Rescue Mission  
Ostego County Housing and Homeless Coalition  
Ostego County Housing Committee  
Ostego County United Way  
Peoples Progressive Network (PPN) of Washtenaw Co.  
Safe Horizons  
Sequel Mental Health Agency, Inc.  
St. Stephen's Human Services  
Waterfalls  
MN Amherst H. Wilder Foundation  
Anoka County Affordable Housing Coalition  
Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project  
CASH  
Celestial Synergy, LLC  
Central Lutheran Church  
Central MN Task Force on Battered Women  
Church of St. Stephens  
Community Home Partnership  
Community Psychologists of Minnesota  
Desera Grimley Consulting  
Duluth Local Initiatives Support Corporation  
Elim Transitional Housing  
Fair Housing Center of Minnesota  
F-M Dorothy Day House of Hospitality, Inc.  
Heartland Community Action Agency  
Housing Access Center  
Housing Coalition of the St. Cloud Area  
Houston County Women's Resources  
Integrated Community Solutions  
Life House  
Mid-Minnesota Women's Center  
Minnesota AIDS Project

Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless  
 Minnesota Housing Partnership  
 Minnesota Librarians For Social Responsibility  
 Minnesota Library Workers for Peace and Justice  
 Model Cities of St. Paul, Inc.  
 People Serving People, Inc.  
 PEPP  
 Project Foundation  
 Project Off Streets  
 Range Transitional Housing  
 Residents for Affordable Housing  
 Rise, Inc  
 ROOF Project  
 Salvation Army Harbor Light Center  
 Scott-Carver Housing Coalition  
 Simpson Housing Services  
 Tri Valley Opportunity Council Inc  
 Volunteers of America Cornerstone  
 Zumbro Valley Mental Health  
 MO Missouri Association for Social Welfare  
 MS Catholic Charities  
 Hinds County Human Resource Agency  
 JHCHC-Ivory Homeless Clinic  
 Mississippi Children's Home Society  
 Seashore Mission UMC  
 NC AIDS Community Residence Association  
 Glory to Glory House of Refuge  
 Greensboro Housing Coalition  
 Pan Lutheran Ministries of Wake County, Inc.  
 The Homeless Coalition  
 ND Mercer County Women's Action & Resource Center  
 Minot Area Homeless Coalition  
 ND Department of Commerce  
 YWCA of Fargo-Moorhead  
 NH Homeless Center for Strafford County

	New Hampshire Coalition to End Homelessness
	Under The Bridge
NJ	Apostle House
	Fair Housing Council of Northern New Jersey
	Garden State Coalition for Youth & Family Concerns
	Greater Newark HUD Tenants' Association
	Middle Earth, Inc
	Middlesex County CEAS Committee
	New Jersey Alliance for the Homeless
	Women Rising, Inc.
NM	Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless
NV	Department of Veteran Affairs
	NV Health Center
	Poverello House
	Straight from the Streets
NY	BIG News
	Center for Youth
	Common Ground Community
	Consumer Information & Dispute Resolution
	Grand Central Neighborhood Social Services
	Homeless in Action
	Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless
	Nassau-Suffolk Coalition for the Homeless
	Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of NYS
	Street News
	The Partnership for the Homeless
	Urban Pathways
OH	CAP Harmony House
	Caracole/HMIS
	Cleveland Tenants Organization
	Columbus Health Department
	Columbus Neighborhood Health Center
	Cross Creek Community Church/UCC
	Faith Mission
	Family Services

Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless  
 Mary Magdalen House  
 Maryhaven-Engagement Center  
 Miller Community House  
 Netcare  
 New Housing Opportunities  
 Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless  
 Run for Shelter  
 Scioto County Homeless Shelter  
 The Salvation Army  
 Volunteers of America, Family Services  
 Welfare Rights Coalition  
 OK Greater Love Outreach/My Sister's Keeper  
 OR Community Resources and Vital Services  
 First United Methodist Church of Portland  
 Oregon Farm Worker Ministry  
 Oregon Partnership Alcohol and Drug Helpline  
 Outside In  
 Recovery Association Project  
 South Coast Homeless Council  
 Street Roots  
 SW Oregon Community Action  
 T.H.E. House  
 YWCA  
 PA Community Human Services Corporation  
 Community of Caring  
 Harrisburg Center for Peace & Justice  
 Kensington Welfare Rights Union  
 Northside Common Ministries  
 Operation Safety Net  
 Project HOME  
 YWCA of Titusville, PA  
 PR Coalicion de Apoyo Continuo a Personas sin Hogar  
 Hogar Padre Venaro, Inc.  
 Iniciativa Comunitaria de Investigacion, Inc.

RI La Fondita de Jesus  
 Advent House  
 Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless  
 Statewide Housing Action Coalition of Rhode Island  
 Travelers Aid Society of Rhode Island

SC Crisis Ministries  
 GAMES Coalition for the Homeless  
 MEG's House  
 South Carolina Inst. on Poverty and Deprivation  
 Upstate Homeless Coalition of South Carolina

TN Amnesty International-Rhodes College Chapter  
 Chattanooga Homeless Coalition  
 Family Life Center  
 Greater Memphis Interagency Council f/t Homeless  
 Homeward Bound Knoxville  
 Memphis Family Shelter  
 Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity  
 Residential Resources  
 S.A.C.H./Rhodes College  
 Tennessee Network For Community Economic Development  
 VA Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Program

TX Abilene Hope Haven  
 Advocacy Outreach  
 AHP Mutual Housing Association  
 Bay Area Homeless Services  
 Butterflies from Heaven Ministries  
 Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris Co.  
 Families Under Urban & Social Attack  
 Fort Bend Co. Social Services  
 Fort Bend County Women's Center  
 Harris Co. Hospital .Dist.-Health Care f/t Homeless Program  
 Healthcare for the Homeless - Houston  
 Holy Rosary Catholic Church  
 House the Homeless, Inc.  
 Houston Community Voice Mail

	Houston Compass
	Hunger Busters
	New Hope Housing, Inc.
	Promise House, Inc.
	Samaritan Inn
	The Arrow Project
	The Houston Launch Pad
	The Samaritan Inn
	Wesley Community Center
UT	Coalition of Religious Communities
	Homeless Health Care Program
	J.E.D.I. for Women
	Utah Issues
VA	Arlington Street People's Assistance Network
	Virginia Coalition for the Homeless
	Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
VT	Paula Nattt, Inc
	Rural Vermont
	Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition
WA	African American Community Education Project
	Associated Ministries
	Friends of Youth
	Helping Hand House
	NAMI Eastside Housing Committee
	Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless
	Washington State Coalition for the Homeless
WI	Family Services of Northeast, Wisconsin, Inc.
	Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee
WV	Cabell-Huntington Coalition for the Homeless
	Huntington West Virginia Housing Authority
	Information and Referral Services
	Scottie's Place, Inc.
WY	Cheyenne Crossroads Clinic

## **Foreign Organizations:**

Canada	L'Itineraire
Norway	World Home
Norway	International Tenants Union