

# National Day of Action for Housing Media Toolkit



## National Coalition for the Homeless

**“Homelessness affects millions of people each year, including a rising number of families with children. To punish people for sleeping, eating, sitting down, or simply storing their belongings in public when they have no alternatives and thesis a persistent lack of affordable housing is ludicrous, not to mention absolutely inhumane. The criminalization of homelessness violated fundamental human rights. All of us, especially our children, deserve to live in a world guided by love. Current policies and practices need to reflect and honor our shared humanity, instead of perpetuating injustice. It is time for collective love and action. We owe it to each other, our children and our children’s children.”**

***Rajni Shankar-Brown, PH. D, Associate Professor at Stetson University, Board Member for The National Coalition for the Homeless, 2017***

# National Day of Action for Housing

## Media Toolkit 2017

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# Talking Points and Tips for the National Day of Action

<h2 style="color: #E67E22;">Criminalization</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The criminalization of homelessness refers to measures that prohibit life-sustaining activities such as: sleeping/camping, eating, sitting, and/or asking for money/resources in public spaces.</li> <li>• These ordinances include criminal penalties for violations of such acts. The criminal penalties then create significant barriers to receiving social services and housing.</li> </ul>
<h2 style="color: #E67E22;">Lack of Affordable Housing</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lack of affordable housing and the limited scale of housing assistance programs have contributed to the current housing crisis and to homelessness.</li> <li>• Recently, foreclosures have also increased the number of people who experience homelessness.</li> <li>• The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that the 2013 Housing Wage is \$18.79, exceeding the \$14.32 hourly wage earned by the average renter by almost \$4.50 an hour, and greatly exceeding wages earned by low income renter households.</li> </ul>
<h2 style="color: #E67E22;">Health Care</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor health is both a cause and a result of homelessness. Many people are reduced to homelessness because of poor health, which can rapidly escalate into employment problems, financial difficulties and housing issues.</li> <li>• Over half of personal bankruptcies in the U.S. result from health issues. Homeless persons also suffer from multiple health problems at a much higher rate than the general population due to increased exposure to the elements, disease, violence, unsanitary conditions, malnutrition, stress, and addictive substances.</li> <li>• Additionally, conditions that require regular, uninterrupted treatment, such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, are extremely difficult to treat or control among those without adequate housing.</li> </ul>

### Importance of Ending Homelessness:

- People regain their dignity.
- Fewer people dying on the streets from preventable ailments or violence.
- Housing is healthcare.
- Children will be able to grow up in an area where they have access to education and a stable life.
- With everyone in society having a home there is possibility for more economic opportunity.

### The goals of the Day of Action include:

- Preserving funding and create further local, state and national Housing Trust Funds that fund housing solely for extremely low to moderate income households.
- Stopping ordinances, policies and practices that 1) criminalize and harass people who are unhoused, 2) promote racial discrimination, or 3) prevent equal treatment of immigrants and those who identify as LGBTQ, especially in access to housing, employment and healthcare.
- Ensuring that safety net programs like food assistance, health care and emergency housing are available to any Americans residents in need of support.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Why are we doing this National Day of Action for Housing?

We are participating in this action because homelessness is an issue that cannot continue to be overlooked. During the presidential election season there was very little discussion on homelessness and lack of affordable housing. It has long been too long since our government provided public affordable housing options and we are tired of struggling for basic human rights.

## How can you participate in the National Day of Action for Housing?

If you would like to partake in the event in Washington DC you can bring tents, signs and any other information relevant to homelessness on April 1st. If you wish to do an event locally, you can organize a sister action which would illuminate the great work you are doing in your community under the umbrella of a national action.

## What the experts are saying:

*“People experiencing homelessness are being criminalized on our streets, and being challenged by a system that is not set up to help everyone who might need a hand up. With the current political climate, it is imperative that we stand up and demand the homes that all of us deserve.”*

**Megan Hustings, Director of National Coalition for the Homeless, 2017**

*“The Constitution guarantees the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The pursuit of happiness cannot begin for people experiencing homelessness until they have the basic resource of housing. It is unconscionable that people are living on the streets of the richest nation in the history of the world.”*

**Donald Whitehead, Consultant and Board Member for The National Coalition for the Homeless, 2017**

*“Homelessness IS a crime, a crime by policy-makers who refuse to acknowledge that the right to safe, affordable and appropriate housing is a human right.”*

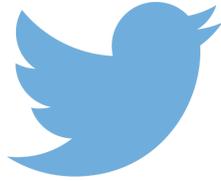
**Anita Beaty, Atlanta Georgia, Board Member for The National Coalition for the Homeless, 2017**

*“A homeless voice is a terrible thing to waste, but a homeless voice with tangible opportunities could build personal power.”*

**Albert Townsend, Board Member for The National Coalition for the homeless, Co-founder of People for Fairness Coalition, 2017**

National Coalition for the Homeless, 2201 P St. NW. Washington D.C. 20037, 202-462-4822, [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org)

# Social Media



Twitter: @Ntl\_homeless

We have listed tweets below to help start discussion and bring awareness to important issues surrounding homelessness.

- ❖ I advocate for safe, affordable housing. #HousingNow RT if you believe everyone deserves a home.
- ❖ Cities are making it illegal for people to sit, sleep and even eat in public areas. Lets help the people who are homeless receive justice. #HousingNotHandcuffs
- ❖ Join our Day of Action April 1st in support of ending homelessness and establishing a better future. #DayofActionforhousing
- ❖ Through the #DayofActionforHousing we can bring national awareness on homeless issues that are being overlooked!
- ❖ Criminalizing people experiencing homelessness cost more money than simply solving the problem by ensuring access to adequate housing. #HousingNotHandcuffs
- ❖ Visit [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org) to endorse our Day of Action for Housing and sign up to attend the event.
- ❖ By limiting the period of time people experience homelessness and helping people return to permanent housing as soon as possible, the negative fallout of homelessness itself can be minimized.
- ❖ There are many barriers homeless individuals face such as stereotypes. RT if you believe in breaking the stereotypes of homelessness.
- ❖ The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that a household must have income of at least \$42,240 per year in order to afford a two-bedroom unit at a HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR) of \$1,056 per month. In 6 states and the District of Columbia, the Housing Wage exceeds **\$25** per hour. #HousingNow

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# Social Media

## Facebook



(Facebook.com/NationalCoalitionfortheHomeless)

Share local data, images and news. Images can be found at [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org). Here are some sample facebook posts if interested in posting on this form of social media.

<b><u>Criminalization:</u></b>	<b><u>Housing:</u></b>	<b><u>State of Homelessness:</u></b>
<p>The criminalization of homelessness refers to measures that prohibit life-sustaining activities such as sleeping/camping, eating, sitting, and/or asking for money/resources in public spaces. Unfortunately, over the past 25 years, cities across the country have penalized people who are forced to carryout out life-sustaining activities on the street and in public spaces; despite the fact these communities lack adequate affordable housing and shelter space. Ultimately, many of these measures are designed to move homeless persons out of sight, and at times out of a given community. #DayofActionforHousing</p>	<p>Housing represents the fundamental base-solution to the problem of homelessness. The lack of affordable housing and the limited scale of housing assistance programs contributes to the current housing crisis and to homelessness. This deficit of affordable housing has led to high rent burdens, overcrowding, and substandard housing, which has not only forced many people to become homeless but has also put a growing number of people at risk of becoming homeless. #HousingNow</p>	<p>HUD estimates that there are roughly 560,000 people who are homeless. Of that number 206,000 were families and 358,000 individuals. With these numbers we need to ensure that we do more to lower this very high number. #DayofActionforHousing</p> <p>For more information please go to: <a href="http://www.nationalhomeless.org">www.nationalhomeless.org</a></p>

# Sample Press Release

Contact: [Your organization contact name, title, organization] [phone number] [email]

## **For immediate release: [Your Organization] wants to See Change in the Homelessness Population through Organized Community Action**

[your city, your state]- [your organization] agrees that lack of affordable housing, criminalization and the causes of homelessness need to be addressed.

The National Day of Action for Housing, on April 1st, 2017 is a day meant to acknowledge the challenge of homelessness in the United States. [Your Organization] is joining the National Coalition for the Homeless in their efforts to combat poverty and are calling on you and those in your community to join. Advocates across the country will be holding marches, rallies and other community actions to demand affordable housing crisis, address racial inequality in our cities, and end the criminalization of poverty.

Homelessness in the United States is widespread. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates that 560,000 people struggle with homelessness on a daily basis. This number has grown since the 1980's due to the lack of affordable housing. According to HUD there is an estimated 12 million renters and homeowners who pay more than 50 percent of their annual incomes. This means that they have difficulty in affording basic necessities such as food and clothing. Megan Hustings, Director of the National Coalition for the Homeless, says that "With so many of us struggling to find and maintain homes in our communities, it is time for our government to once again invest in housing like it did in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century!"

Further, cities across the country are criminalizing basic life-sustaining activities people who are homeless are forced to carry out in public. There are laws in place that prevent homeless persons from staying in crucial service and outreach areas, or accessing housing, employment and health care. Arrests and fines only give people experiencing homelessness further barriers to future employment or housing. Studies show that the cost to cities of incarcerating someone is more than the cost would be to provide supportive housing.

The current presidential administration and congress is looking to make steep cuts to safety net services including the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Dissolution of the ACA, especially Medicaid expansion, could leave millions of low-income and homeless individuals without access to vital health coverages and services, and communities without added ways to provide housing as a key health care component for patients.

The National Day of Action for Housing on April 1st is an opportunity to ensure our legislators understand the need to make housing a priority for our communities. To learn more about the action, and what can be done to end homelessness, visit [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org).

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***By standing together we can make the necessary changes to end homelessness!***

Contact Information:

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[mhustings@nationalhomeless.org](mailto:mhustings@nationalhomeless.org)

Visit our website to register:

[nationalhomeless.org/national-day-of-action-for-housing](http://nationalhomeless.org/national-day-of-action-for-housing)

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