

# Faces of Homelessness: A Manual



National Coalition for  
the Homeless

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## Why I Speak

Upon meeting NCH's Director of Community Organizing, Michael Stoops, and listening to his ideas for the Speakers' Bureau in 1996, I thought it was a dynamite idea. Who else can tell about being homeless but a homeless person? Anyone can get up and speak on the issue, but if they weren't homeless or had never been homeless they would only be speaking about things they had heard. The ladies and gentlemen who are on the Speakers' Bureau speak from experience.

I've been speaking for many years and wish I could speak for many more. It has helped me grow strong and be proud, because I know that hearing my story has helped several people, and I have letters and cards to prove it.

I've also received a lot of help from the interns that volunteer with us. It's always sad when they leave, because I become attached to everyone. They are such lovely kids and dedicated to what they believe in.



*JoAnne Jackson, Washington, DC*

The Speakers' Bureau has really grown since 1996 and is still growing every day. I wouldn't trade being a speaker for all the tea in China. My life has been really good knowing that I have such a big and lovely family. Thanks, Michael Stoops, for helping me realize that I could speak.

JoAnn Jackson

## Overview

*“One of the most valuable things we can do to heal one another is listen to each other’s stories.” - Rebecca Falls, Student*

The Faces of Homelessness Speakers’ Bureau is a program of the National Coalition for the Homeless that is comprised of people who are or have been homeless. It works to educate the public about homelessness and what can be done to end it. This approach is a unique and necessary tool because it establishes a significant platform for those whom homelessness affects directly to talk personally about their experiences. Additionally, the Speakers’ Bureau creates opportunities for members to advocate for themselves and others, as well as build the necessary bridges with the rest of society so that we may work cooperatively to end this disgrace called homelessness.



Public perceptions and attitudes toward persons experiencing homelessness or in danger of becoming homeless need to change in order for positive, long-term solutions to be realized. Most Americans rarely interact with people who are or have been homeless. The lack of interaction between different groups of our society, combined with impersonal or inaccurate

*George Siletti, Unknown, James Davis*

descriptions of homelessness posed by the media and public officials, contributes to a distancing of those who have housing from those who do not. As a result, homelessness is perceived as an abstract social problem. Those who experience homelessness are seen as the sources of their own misfortunes, and the socio-economic policies and practices that give rise to homelessness are then too easily ignored. This abstraction, in turn, lessens the degree of urgency and commitment needed to work strategically and consistently toward solutions to end homelessness that are long-term, outcome-based, and not simply responses to crises. The Speakers’ Bureau is both an accurate and dynamic tool to teach and challenge

tomorrow's leaders as well as empower those who have experienced homelessness first-hand. By fostering an environment of self-worth, respect, and understanding for all people, the Speakers' Bureau challenges us to believe that we can and should end homelessness.

The "Faces of Homelessness" Panel standard presentation format includes: a short video about homelessness in America, a moderator to present the facts about homelessness, and up to three panelists who are or have been homeless.

Afterwards, the moderator and the panelists will offer ways for people to get involved, from volunteering at shelters to influencing legislation. Finally, the moderator will conduct a question and answer session. Each presentation can last anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours.

The panel has a very powerful impact on all participants. It allows people to personalize homelessness, dispel stereotypes, and inspire hope by presenting the first-hand experiences of the panelists, and allowing the general public to interact with these "experts" through question and answer sessions, and one-on-one discussions after the presentations. It also works to inspire student and community involvement and activism through volunteerism and grassroots advocacy. The panelists and moderator will discuss the importance and impact of volunteer efforts, and act as a resource for people interested in getting involved. Finally, it serves as an empowerment tool for those people who are or have been homeless to realize their potential to have an impact and inspire others through their personal stories and advocacy. By linking the individual lives and stories with broader systemic and structural factors, we are then able to more clearly see the need for change.

## Recruiting Speakers

The first task in establishing a Speakers' Bureau is finding speakers. In order to accomplish this, you need to do some outreach. The task of outreach involves building relationships with the homeless community. Here are a few suggestions that you can utilize when recruiting.

First and foremost, successful outreach is an exercise in respect. When approaching someone who is homeless, it is easy to find yourself talking at the person. Instead, try to have a conversation with them. Asking someone's name is a good way to begin.

Ask them to tell you their story. Not only is this a good way to get to know the person better, but it will also help you to identify whether or not this individual is a good candidate for the Speakers' Bureau.

Explain your program in full. Let prospective speakers know what your mission is and why you are involved in the program. Give them the details upfront about what will be expected of them if they choose to join the Speakers' Bureau, and what the benefits are.

Make sure not to pressure the person into revealing personal information about themselves that they do not wish to offer. Not everyone feels comfortable telling their life story to a stranger. Let them know that they do not have to discuss anything that makes them uncomfortable. Some speakers may participate in several presentations before they are ready to share their whole story.

Apart from doing street outreach, you can recruit speakers at shelters and meal programs. Get to know the people who provide services for the homeless in your community. Set up meetings at locations where services are provided and talk to the clients about your program. Have agencies post flyers informing residents of the opportunity to become a speaker.

After you have recruited a few speakers, you will find that they can be an excellent sources for finding other prospective speakers. Ask your speakers if they know of anyone else who might want to participate, and ask them to tell their friends about the program.

One final point to consider when recruiting is diversity. Make sure that you recruit participants of various ages and ethnic backgrounds. Try to have at least one female speaker for every two male speakers, and make sure that your speakers have varied backgrounds and stories. With a more diverse Speakers' Bureau, you will be able to set up stronger and more successful panels.

## Public Speaking 101

*“You can speak well if your tongue can deliver the message of your heart.” - John Ford, academy award winning film director*

Public speaking is not a gift that everyone is born with. Most people need to learn how to deliver a successful speech. You will have to be ready to help your speakers prepare for the experience of participating in a “Faces of Homelessness” panel, and you might also benefit from some pointers on how to give a powerful presentation. The following is a list of a few tips to help you and your speakers get started.



1. Be prepared. Make sure you have a good idea of what you are going to say before you walk into your first event. Prepare a written text if it will help you to stay on track, but make sure to rehearse enough so that you aren't just reading a speech to the audience.
2. Get to know your audience. Greet them as they arrive and ask a few of them what their names are. This way you won't feel like you are talking to a room full of strangers.
3. Use eye contact. This is the best way to hold your audience's attention, and they will feel more involved in the presentation if you are addressing them directly.
4. Focus on your message. Try to make your presentation flow naturally. Don't get sidetracked.
5. Move around. Make your audience focus on you, not on where you are standing. If you are sitting in front of a group, use gestures to keep the audience engaged.
6. Enunciate clearly. Speak slowly and clearly so that your audience can hear and understand you. Use a microphone if available.
7. Understand your audience. While every speaker has his or her own style, try to adapt to the mood of the group you are addressing.



8. Reinforce certain points. Unlike a written presentation, a speech needs to be delivered in a way that reminds the audience of the important points. In your opening, explain what you are going to discuss, and in your closing, recap.
9. Avoid debates. While taking a little feedback during your presentation can keep the audience engaged, it can also get you sidetracked. You can always continue the discussion during the question and answer phase.
10. Practice makes perfect. As you and your speakers become more experienced, your presentation will be more polished, and your panels will be more successful.

## Getting the Word Out

In order to start a successful Speakers' Bureau, or for that matter any other community-based program, you need to mount a successful community awareness campaign. Using a combination of traditional and non-traditional advertising along with aggressive outreach, you will be able to build a strong base of support for your organization.

Set up meetings with local schools and religious groups. Explain your program, stressing the educational benefits of getting to know a segment of community as individuals rather than as a stereotyped class of people. Talk about the rising trend of violence perpetrated against people experiencing homelessness by primarily young adults. Bring one of your speakers along to share his or her story and explain why this experience is valuable. Pass out materials that interested parties can refer to when explaining the program to others, such as a brochure.

Contact community or school/college newspapers and local media outlets to see if they might be interested in doing a story about the Speakers' Bureau. Find out if any of your speakers might be willing to do interviews. Remember that media organizations are more interested in stories than issues, so focus on the human interest side of the program, rather than statistics.

Explore more non-traditional advertising such as flyers or church/synagogue bulletins. Set up a website and conduct email campaigns. Hold a sleep-out with local students or religious groups. Get to know all of the possibilities for getting the word out in your community. There are literally dozens of ways to reach those who might be interested in hosting a panel.

Don't forget to connect with allies in your community. Meet with other organizations who work people experiencing homelessness, and enlist their help in spreading the word about the Speakers' Bureau. If a school or church/synagogue in your community has hosted an NCH "Faces" panel, have them spread the word about their experience and what it meant to them.

The above are just some of the ways that you can spread the word about the Speakers' Bureau throughout your community. Once you have your "foot in the door" and have conducted a few successful panels, you will find that word of mouth is your greatest ally in bringing more attention to your program.

## Impacts of Our Bureau

*“I am not sure if told you, but David’s last talk literally changed the life of one of my students. David spoke with the student after class. And then when I was walking to get a cup of coffee, I ran into the student. We began talking. It ended up that he had a drug problem that he feared was masking depression. He sought help and he even walks differently. And David was the catalyst for his change.”*

**Katherine Murphy, Gonzaga College High School, Washington, DC—2012**

*“John is an artful speaker. He wove together deep insights about the experience of being homeless that provoked the students to connect to wider justice issues. His talk rendered thought and questioning gently. Rather than hitting them over the head and telling them to care, he opened minds and hearts. The boys were obviously moved. Every kid was engaged and listened deeply”*

**Katherine Murphy, Gonzaga College High School, Washington, DC—2013**

*“I had the pleasure of hosting your two speakers yesterday in my class, and wanted to let you know that it was all that I had hoped it would be. My students were riveted, and could have asked questions for a longer period of time than we had available.”*

**Dr. Lauren Bennett Cattaneo, Dept. of Psychology, George Mason U.--2012**

*“Thank you so much for providing us with such great speakers year and year. It’s not always easy to connect with kids, but with every year the people that you send have really managed to give the kids a deeper understanding of issues surrounding homelessness.”*

**Rachel Druck, Camp Rodef Shalom--2012**

*“I had the privilege of staying for the panel with Alan and Eric last week. They worked well together balancing each other and giving different perspectives. It was a special afternoon, two of the students in the group shared about their own experiences with homelessness. Alan did a great job at acknowledging the courage it took to share. I am so grateful for the space that Alan and Eric were*

*able to shape that made the group able to share honestly. Eric's knowledge and facts were really helpful for the group."*

**Karina Saunders, Pilgrimage Program Manager, Washington, DC—2012**

*"The Faces seminars have received consistently high marks from our staff all year. Our instructors feel that the speakers do a great job educating the students (and connecting with them at their level) about homelessness and the humanity of homeless individuals and provide some great advice to the students as they are starting to make their own choices in life."*

**Linda C. Zack, Close Up Foundation, Virginia—2013**

*"Thanks you for your help in arranging another meaningful experience at NCH for HMJDS 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Our students really learned a lot and, as always, reported that this was on of the most memorable parts of the trip. The outreach run went well too."*

**Abbe Payton, Heilicher Minneapolis Jewish Day School--2013**

*"I wanted to again thank you for touching the lives of our Irish students who came to your Speakers' Bureau last month. Throughout their travels in the US, the group had many eye opening experiences, however, the reaction they had to Steve and Alan were incredibly powerful. In fact, while our students pride themselves on not outwardly expressing their sensitive emotions, three cried due to the stories your speakers shared, and one even said, it was more meaningful for him to meet Steve than Dan Rooney, the owner of the Steelers!"*

**Suzanne Unger, Washington D.C. Site Leader, Amizade Global Service-Learning—2013**

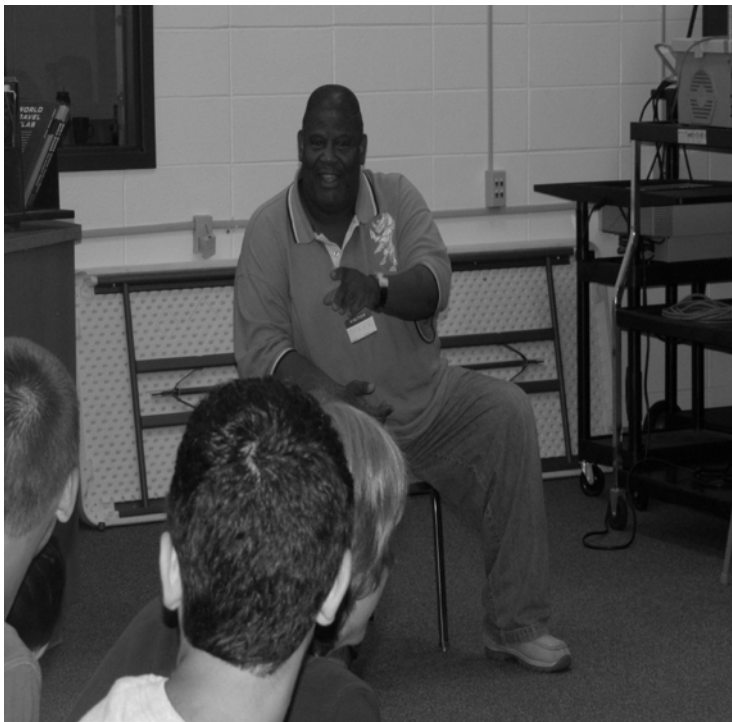
*"First, I wanted to pass along some immense praise for Candi's seminar with our Young Women's Leadership Program this week. Our lead curriculum designer told me that she was 'perfect,' and that these young women were 'observably inspired by her and her message.' So thank you so much to Candi, and to you for making this happen!"*

**Maura O'Brien, Close Up Foundation, Virginia--2013**

## Setting the Agenda

Once your Speakers' Bureau gets off the ground, you will soon find that the majority of the work you do is in between speaking engagements. Recruiting new speakers, soliciting, scheduling and planning events, and conducting meetings are all vital aspects of making a Speakers' Bureau work.

As your roster of speakers begins to grow, you will have to address the issue of scheduling events. This activity is not as straightforward as it might at first seem. Several factors will have to be taken into account when scheduling a successful event.



*Steve Thomas, Washington, DC*

- Age – Is your audience older or younger? Make sure to have at least one speaker on the panel who can relate to their life experience.
- Gender – You will most likely have more male than female speakers, but at least try to make sure to have one woman on each panel.
- Race – The more ethnically diverse your panel is, the more successful it will be in breaking stereotypes.

- Story – The more varied the panel's education, economic background, and causes of homelessness, the wider effect they will have on their audience.

As you get to know your speakers, you will begin to get a good feel for who works well together. Try to be as fair as possible when scheduling events, but make sure to bring your best speakers to your most important engagements.

Every month (or every other month, depending upon the number of events you are able to schedule), hold a Speakers' Bureau meeting. Make sure that the date and time of the meeting works well for as many of your speakers as possible. Provide food if financially possible.

During the meeting you can give feedback to the speakers about the previous month's events, update speakers on local projects and policies, and meet individually with speakers to assign speaking engagements for the following month. Make sure to take input about what they want to accomplish with the bureau; this will instill a sense of ownership and help to build a stronger relationship between you and your speakers.

## Moderating a Speaking Engagement

*“Speech is power: speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel.”*  
*- Ralph Waldo Emerson, poet*

The work involved in successfully executing a speaking engagement begins as soon as you receive an event request. If the request was submitted via email or phone, make sure to send out an event request form. This form will contain standard questions that, when answered, will assist you in planning for the event. Get the name of your contact at the event and a cell phone number, and email address where he or she can be reached in case of an emergency.

Try to get several prospective dates for the engagement. Let hosts know that the less flexible the date, the earlier the request will have to be formally submitted in order to be scheduled.



*David Harris, Washington, DC*

It should be the host group’s obligation to arrange or pay for transportation. You can add this to be part of the honorarium. For local events, this may mean a small reimbursement for bus or subway fares for you and your speakers. For longer distances, the host may have to pay for a rental vehicle or other means of transportation.

If travel to and from an engagement will involve more than a few hours, food expenses will have to be taken into account. Again, the host will be responsible for covering the cost of meals. Make sure to document all expenses incurred by saving and copying receipts, in order to eliminate any confusion regarding reimbursements.

It is very important to find out in advance whether the host group intends to pay the speakers’ bureau by cash or check. Never put a speaker in the position of not knowing when s/he will get the honorarium, --as this can cause tension between you and your speakers.



Find out in advance about the space in which you will be speaking. Plan to arrive early enough to set up the space, or arrange the set-up in advance with the host.

When you arrive at the event, find your contact person and introduce the speakers. Confirm the amount of time allotted for the presentation, as plans can sometimes change on short notice. After set-up is completed and the audience has assembled, it's time to begin your presentation.

As a moderator, your first job will be to introduce your organization. Your introduction should be engaging, but don't get too involved; you want to reserve the majority of the time available for your speakers' stories. Use some statistics about the homeless situation to draw a picture for your audience of the scope of the problem, both local and national.

During the introduction, you may want to utilize a short video on homelessness to help engage the audience. Contact the National Coalition for the Homeless for suggestions: [speakersbureau@nationalhomeless.org](mailto:speakersbureau@nationalhomeless.org).

After the introduction, it's time to introduce your speakers. During this segment of the presentation your main responsibility will be to manage the time. Normally, each participant will speak for ten to fifteen minutes, but some speakers may take a longer or shorter time to tell their stories, so it will be your job to make sure that every speaker gets adequate time.

After your last speaker has finished, open up the session for questions from the audience. If there are no questions, throw one out. There are some questions that are consistently brought up at presentations, such as:

1. What should I do if I see a homeless person on the street?
2. What should I do when approached by someone who asks me for money?
3. What can I do to help the homeless?
4. Where was the speaker's family during his or her time on the streets?

Use one of these questions to help bring out more questions from the audience. Occasionally you may encounter an audience member who wants to get into a debate with you or one of your speakers. If this happens, remember that it is your job to set the tone of the conversation, so work to diffuse the tension by being polite and respectful of his or her views.





*Eric Sheptock, Washington, DC (center)*

When there are no more questions, it's time to wrap up the presentation. In closing, stress the important points brought up during the presentation, and let the audience know how they can help. NCH uses an acronym – C.A.R.E. Contribute,

Advocate, Reach Out, and Educate to get this message out. Don't forget to pass out brochures for your organization, and provide a sign up sheet so that audience members can get plugged in with your organization. Try to save a few minutes after the presentation for individuals to talk one on one with your speakers.

Moderating a speaking engagement may seem fairly straightforward, but the difference between a competent moderator and a great one cannot easily be summed up in a manual. You really have to have a passion for the job, because if you don't, it will come across to your audience. But if you follow the above suggestions, you should be able to put together a presentation that will both educate and, hopefully, mobilize your audience to make a change in the way your community deals with homelessness.

## Other Activities

Apart from speaking engagements, the NCH Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau organizes a number of other activities and events that help to forward our agenda against homelessness and its causes.

- **National Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project**  
In response to increasing civil rights abuses, NCH is coordinating a locally-based national movement to protect the civil rights of people who are homeless. Find out what you can do to help prevent and combat the violation of homeless people's civil rights.
- **"You Don't Need A Home to Vote" Voting Rights Campaign**  
Since 1992, this campaign has already registered thousands of homeless people in all 50 states, DC and Puerto Rico. The campaign seeks to protect and promote the right of homeless people to vote.
- **Hate Crimes/Violence Prevention Project**  
Since 1999, advocates and homeless shelter workers from around the country have received news and incident reports of men, women and even children being harassed, kicked, set on fire, and beaten to death. NCH publishes an annual report on such incidents.
- **National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week**  
Co-sponsored annually by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness, National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is always the first full week before Thanksgiving.
- **National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day**  
Co-sponsored annually by the National Coalition for the Homeless, National Health Care for the Homeless Council, and the National Consumer Advisory Board, National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day is always on or near December 21st

You can find more information about these and other activities at our website, <http://www.nationalhomeless.org>.

## **Faces of Homelessness, Speakers Bureau Coordinator**

(To be filled by a community volunteer, Americorps\*VISTA Volunteer, or a designated staff person)

### **Position Description:**

As a coordinator, you will establish and run a “Faces of Homelessness” Speakers’ Bureau in your community via a local homeless agency. To establish a Speakers’ Bureau you will need to immerse yourself in the community by attending meetings of your local homeless coalition and/or homeless service provider, meet with case managers, talk to people in the parks, streets, visit shelters and meal programs. Learn about homelessness in your community as much possible. Your Speakers’ Bureau will be comprised completely of people who have experienced homelessness.

As you are working on a Speakers’ Bureau brochure, creating fliers and training materials, recruiting potential speakers, and getting to know your homeless community, at the same time you will need to visit the schools to meet with teachers. You will need to visit pastors and rabbis at churches, synagogues, etc. to promote the Speakers’ Bureau in hopes of eventually bringing the Faces of Homelessness presentation to those organizations.

Through the work that you will be doing in developing a Speakers’ Bureau, you will be playing a key role in educating your community about the issues surrounding homelessness. You will also be raising awareness about the great work that your local homeless agency does and some fundraising to support the Speakers’ Bureau as a sustainable program.

## **PRESENTATION SPEAKING POINTS:**

### Greetings and Introductions:

- Thank host, introduce speakers and yourself.
- Introduce Organization as Faces of Homelessness Panel

### Myths/Stereotypes:

- What do you think of when you hear the word homelessness?
- Those experiencing homelessness are often seen as causes of their own misfortunes and the socioeconomic policies and practices that give rise to homelessness are then too easily ignored.

### Criminalization of People Experiencing Homelessness:

- An unfortunate trend in cities around the country has been to use the criminal system to respond to people living in public spaces.
- This trend includes measures that target homeless persons by making it illegal to perform life sustaining activities in public places.
- These measures prohibit activities such as sleeping, eating, sitting, begging in public spaces, usually including criminal penalties for violation of these laws.

### Hate Crimes Against People Experiencing Homelessness:

- An epidemic of violent attacks against homeless people sweeps our nation. These violent attacks are primarily committed by our nation's young adults and youth.





## **SPEAKERS' BUREAU**

### **What does the Speakers' Bureau do?**

- Speak to youth, civic and religious groups, and service clubs about issues surrounding homelessness
- Dispel myths/stereotypes
- Educate people
- Personalize, individualize and put a “face” on “homelessness”

**If you would like more information please contact:**

**[Your Name] • [Your Phone Number] • [Your E-mail address]**

#### **Co-Sponsoring Organizations**

Local Agency Logo  Here
----------------------------------



**[Name of local host organization]**

**[Local host organization address]**

## Sample letter to Publicize the Speakers' Bureau

Date

Dear [Superintendent Smith]:

This is to let you know of an interesting new project coming from [Your Host Organization] this year. It is the Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau intended to educate our community about the complex issue of homelessness.

[Your Host Organization] has a coordinator assigned to carry out this program. [Your Name] is [Something about yourself], and is performing a wonderful community service with this presentation. [He/she] has a group of homeless/formerly homeless individuals to provide an inside perspective on the state of being homeless. This presentation to various groups of people at schools, churches/synagogues and other venues has already produced very positive feedback about the powerful impact of hearing stories of how people became homeless and how they were able to break out of homelessness.

We are asking your organization to give [Your Host Organization] the opportunity to present an educational workshop to your students. It can be a small class/meeting or to an assembly of your entire student body. It can be 30 minutes to two hours. Please contact [Your Name] at [E-mail address] or [Phone number] or you can contact me at [Agency]. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Agency Director Name]

Agency Director

## How You Can Help End Homelessness

Advocacy is critical to creating the systemic changes needed to end homelessness. Advocacy means working with people experiencing homelessness to bring about positive changes in policies and programs on the local, state, and federal levels. It also means changing your language and behaviors in small ways that may contribute to larger changes in the way people experiencing homelessness are seen and treated in our society.

### C.A.R.E.

**CONTRIBUTE:** Donate money and clothing to local shelters, and food to soup kitchens or food pantries

**ADVOCATE:** Contact your elected officials (see below)

**REACH OUT:** Take sandwiches and toiletries to distribute to homeless in parks or other gathering places

**EDUCATE:** Participate in Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week, follow and share NCH content:

 /NationalCoalitionfortheHomeless  @Ntl\_Homeless

Hashtags: #right2rest, #homesnohandcuffs, #SafeSleep, #NHHAW,  
#HomelessMemorial, #affordablehousing, #endhomelessness

### BECOME A MEMBER OF NCH

Visit [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org) to donate or find additional information about Homelessness.

### CALL YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Your elected officials do take your input seriously. Tell them that as a constituent of their district, you urge them to support policies that work to end homelessness and poverty such as:

#### FEDERAL:

- Support adding Housing Status to Federal Hate Crimes Statistics Statute
- Ensure ongoing funding for the National Housing Trust Fund
- Preserve and increase funding for Housing Vouchers, SNAP and other safety net services
- Raise the Minimum Wage

#### STATE AND LOCAL:

- Support Homeless Bill of Rights measures
- Add Housing Status to state Hate Crimes statutes
- Reject policies that criminalize the homeless, such as anti-loitering and anti-panhandling laws
- Reduce barriers for the development of affordable housing

\*Don't know who your Congressional Senator or Representative? Find a listing at [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) and [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov).

### GIVE FROM YOUR HEART

If you don't have money to give to someone, smile and tell them you do not have anything to give. A lot of times a smile and "Hello" will go a long way. Stop and speak to a homeless person. Tell them your name and ask them how they are doing. You never know, through a little conversation, you might make a new friend.





*Every person has a story.*

## EVALUATION FORM

Thank you for helping us to improve the quality of our presentations. Please complete this form, fold in half, and return it to a [Your Local Agency Name] staff member or mail it to the address below.

Your Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Event Name \_\_\_\_\_ Speaker's Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please rate your experience with this presentation.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
The presentation met my expectations and raised my awareness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The content of the presentation was informational.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The speakers' presentation kept my interest.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend this presentation to a friend or colleague.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This presentation helped motivate me to get involved with this issue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What did you like most about this presentation?

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3. What did you like least about this presentation?

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4. What suggestion(s) would you give to improve this presentation?

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Please return the completed form to:

[Local Host Agency], Attn: Speakers' Bureau, [Local Host Agency Address] For further information, contact: [Your Name], Coordinator, Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau, at [Your Phone Number] or [Your E-mail]



Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau

National Coalition for the Homeless

2201 P Street, NW

Washington, DC 20037-1033

Phone: 202-462-4822

Email: [speakersbureau@nationalhomeless.org](mailto:speakersbureau@nationalhomeless.org)

Thank you for your interest in having the “Faces of Homelessness” Speakers’ Bureau attend your upcoming event. This public education program is an essential part of our mission at the National Coalition for the Homeless, and we appreciate you giving us the opportunity to work with you on this.

The Faces of Homelessness Speakers’ Bureau is committed to promoting advocacy, education, and service. As people who have or are experiencing homelessness, the speakers on our Bureau are the “real experts” on homelessness issues and we believe that their voices are essential in the fight to end homelessness.

We look forward to working with you and learning more about your event. Please review our information and guidelines for event hosts and complete the event form and return it in as timely a manner as possible.

Sincerely,

Director, Faces of Homelessness Speakers’ Bureau

National Coalition for the Homeless

## Event Guidelines and Information

### Presentation Format

Moderator: Statistics and Stereotypes (10 minutes)

Video: We have several short videos to choose from

Speaker Testimonies (10 -15 minutes each)

Question and Answer (15 minutes)

We can work together to tailor our standard format to your needs.

### Honoraria + Program Fee

Each speaker will receive a suggested \$50 honorarium (which includes \$10 for local travel costs) for each time they speak locally. An invoice will be sent in advance of the presentation. The ***honoraria*** program fee, if any, must be must be paid in advance of the presentation.

### Travel

If you are located in public transportation-friendly city, speakers can usually use public transportation. Speakers can also take a taxi or the moderator can rent a car. Taxi or rental car fare is to be covered by the host group.

### Donation

If your organization would like to support the work of the National Coalition for the Homeless it can do so by becoming a member or making a donation.

### Event Request Form

What is the name of your Organization?

**Primary Contact Information:** Name/Title

Email

Phone

Mailing Address

City

State

Zip

How many speakers would you like on the panel? (we recommend two to three speakers)

If you have seen the panel before, would you like to request a particular speaker(s)? Please enter the Speaker(s) or preferred gender.

☐ No ☐ Yes (please enter names)

When is your event?

Date

Time

What time would you like us to arrive?

Estimated Length of Presentation:

Where is the event located?

Will food be provided either before or after the event?

☐ No

☐ Yes

What is the easiest or cheapest way of transportation to get to where the speaking engagement will be held? (metro, taxi, bus). If public transportation, please indicate which subway line/stop or bus number and stop. If the venue offers a free shuttle, please give the appropriate logistical information (e.g. pick up times).

What is the format of the event (keynote, workshop, class, discussion, etc.)?

Will you be present at the presentation? Please list your cell phone number.

Do you have a particular subject focus or audience need? (homeless children, housing issues, health care, veterans, policy, etc.)

Expected Attendance:

Audience Age Range:

Audience's Level of Knowledge about Homelessness

Other Comments/ Questions?

## Draft Letter to Local Homeless Agencies to Recruit Speakers

Date:

«ORG»

«ADD1»

«CITY», «STATE» «ZIP»

Dear «FNAME» «LNAME»,

I am writing to inform you about a public education program called the “Faces of Homelessness” Speakers’ Bureau. The ((local organization)) firmly believes that we cannot truly end homelessness or advocate for change without the direct and continued involvement of persons who have experienced homelessness. The mission of the “Faces of Homelessness” Speakers’ Bureau is to “provide a forum for people experiencing homelessness to share their personal stories with others; break down the myths/stereotypes about people experiencing homelessness; to foster a greater awareness of the reality of not having a home in America; and to spark interest in becoming involved in the struggle to end homelessness on the local, state and national levels.”

The ((local organization)) “Faces of Homelessness” Speakers’ Bureau will be speaking to various groups including: youth and religious groups, middle schools, high schools, colleges and civic groups. The Speakers’ Bureau is comprised of people experiencing homelessness.

We are looking for speakers who are interested in sharing their stories, talking openly about the issue of homelessness, and inspiring others to action to bring an end to the injustice of homelessness. Speakers receive a small honorarium each time they speak. Travel costs for the speakers will also be covered.

I have included a flyer that you can put up in your office, shelter, or any other common area. I would very much like to come and speak to your organization to answer any questions they may have and to talk a little bit more about ((local coalition)), as well as the Speakers’ Bureau’.

Please contact me via phone: ((**number**)), or email: ((**address**)) with any questions, recommendations for speakers, or requests for more information.

Thank you very much for the work you do everyday for those in need. I look forward to hearing back from, and working with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

((local coordinator))

((local coalition))

## **“Faces of Homelessness” Speakers’ Bureau**

Washington, DC

### **Mission**

The National Coalition for the Homeless was founded in 1982 and is the nation’s oldest and largest homeless advocacy group of individuals and organizations committed to preventing and ending homelessness. Creating systematic and attitudinal changes necessary to prevent and end homelessness has been central to our mission of NCH since its inception.

The mission of the Faces of Homelessness Speakers’ Bureau is to provide a forum for people who have experienced homelessness to share their personal stories with others; to show who becomes homeless and why; to foster a greater awareness of the reality of not having a home in America; and to spark interest in becoming involved in the struggle to end homelessness on both a local and a national level.

### **History**

The Faces of Homelessness Speakers’ Bureau began in Washington, DC in 1996 and has grown now to where we have over 25 speakers who have shared their stories. Each year these speakers address nearly 300 groups, reaching a combined audience of over 10,000 people.

### **Project Goals**

Public perceptions and attitudes toward persons experiencing homelessness need to change in order for a positive, long-term solution to be realized. Members of the Faces of Homelessness Speakers’ Bureau play an important part in educating young people today by breaking down those stereotypes and that many people have about those experiencing homelessness.

*The Faces of Homelessness Speakers’ Bureau gives audience members an opportunity to:*

- Put a human face to homelessness. Most people have never had a conversation with a homeless person and so they have not heard why that particular individual became homeless. The “Faces of Homelessness” panel gives audience members a chance to hear a personal story, ask questions and learn about the various issues surrounding homelessness and hopefully in the process educate themselves.
- Build bridges with people experiencing homelessness. Formerly homeless speakers have effectively described what made the difference for them personally in breaking out of the cycle of homelessness.
- Challenge the myths of homelessness so that they may understand its realities.
- Educate their community about homelessness by CARE-ing (Contribute, Advocate, Reach Out, and Educate).
- Challenge themselves to end homelessness in America.

*The Faces of Homelessness Speakers’ Bureau gives speakers an opportunity to:*

- Let their voices truly be heard
- Play a key role in breaking down myths/stereotypes, as well as educating the public about the realities of homelessness.
- To share their stories, provide insight, thoughts, and ideas related to homelessness and what individuals can do to make a difference.
- Speak to youth from different ethnic, religious, economic and cultural backgrounds.
- To empower others to action.

## The Panels

The standard presentation format includes a discussion of statistics and stereotypes by the moderator, showing a video, speakers sharing their personal stories and a Q&A session.

1. Introduction (ask audience questions, discuss statistics and stereotypes - (10 minutes)
2. Show a short video
3. Panelists share their stories (up to 3 panelists – speak for 10 to 15 minutes each—depending on time provided)
4. Q&A (15 minutes)
5. Discuss Reports, Legislation and Ways to get involved (CARE-ing) – 5 minutes

## Speaking

Each speaker is given roughly 10 to 15 minutes to share his or her story with the audience. The time they are allowed depends on the amount of speakers on the panel as well as the allotted time given by the group.

Often times speakers are requested from groups we speak to on a regular basis. We spread out the speaking engagements as fairly as we can to the members of the Speakers' Bureau. Sometimes groups ask for a homeless youth or family, someone who is a homeless veteran or single women with kids, etc.

## Honorariums

Each speaker will receive an honorarium for local speaking engagements, which includes travel costs. Each speaker will sign a Speakers Bureau receipt form stating that he/she received an honorarium for that engagement.

## *Speakers' Bureau Behavior Policy*

- **The "Faces of Homelessness" Speakers' Bureau is a drug and alcohol free program.** NCH speakers represent NCH and its national network of speakers' bureaus and therefore must remain drug and alcohol free before and during speaking engagements. Each and every speaker must remain drug and alcohol free for the entire day leading up to a speaking engagement and during the speaking engagement, regardless of a speakers' status of addiction or recovery.
- **The use of curse words is prohibited.** We speak to many different groups, many of whom are deeply religious. Because of this, the use of curse words is prohibited. We cannot afford to offend others or damage our reputation
- **You must be respectful of the group to which we are presenting.** We present to a very diverse group of audiences, with many different beliefs, experiences, and backgrounds. Please always remain open-minded.
- **The moderator of the panel is in charge of the event.** He or she will speak first and then introduce the speakers. The moderator will also take the lead role during the Question and Answer session
- **Questions from audience members will be directed to the moderator who will then call on which speaker to answer.** This ensures that all the speakers get a chance to answer questions. It is not necessary for each speaker to respond to the same question.

- **Be aware of how much time you have to talk.** If one speaker talks too long, it doesn't give the other speakers enough time to tell their stories. The moderator will give you a sign that it is time to wrap it up.
- **The moderator and speakers are not to solicit money from audience members during either the formal presentation or informally afterwards.** If an audience member offers you a cash donation, please refuse it and indicate that the host group is already giving you an honorarium for speaking. The audience member can be informed that s/he can always make a donation to NCH or give to the next homeless person s/he meets on the streets. Host groups will be informed about this policy in advance of each and every event.
- **Asking for monetary donations from staff/interns is prohibited.** It is NCH policy that no staff/interns are allowed to give or loan money to any speaker
- **Promoting your own non-profit organization is prohibited** at a Speakers' Bureau panel. The only website to be mentioned is that of the National Coalition for the Homeless ([www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org))
- **Promoting your own personal or organizational Facebook, MySpace, Twitter accounts is prohibited.** The moderator and speakers will direct audience members to go to NCH's social media accounts.
- **Passing out personal business cards at Speakers' Bureau events is prohibited.** We have general NCH business cards for speakers to give out. If someone calls or emails NCH to contact a speaker, we will pass this information on to you.
- **The sale of products (books, videos, Street Sense) either during or after the event is prohibited.**
- **Cancellations.** If you cannot make a speaking engagement, please contact us at least 5 hours in advance for a local speaking engagement and 24 hours in advance for an out of state speaking engagement.
- **Physical Contact.** No touching of any audience member (exceptions are hugs, shaking hands, group photo after the panel).
- **Annual Review.** All speakers must have an annual review of their involvement with NCH and the Speakers' Bureau. A decision will be made by the Project Director on whether to renew your membership with the Speakers' Bureau.

**The first violation of these rules will result in a warning, and the second violation will result in dismissal from the Speakers' Bureau.**



## "FACES OF HOMELESSNESS" *SPEAKING TIPS*

When it comes to public speaking, it is very important to be an effective speaker so that you can get information across to the audience in a clear, concise, logical, and powerful way. Below you will find some tips for speaking in public.

Most of you will develop your own speaking styles, but we are happy to work with you on improving the effectiveness of your presentations. We are including a few thoughts that we have compiled that can help structure and effectively convey the message your message. However, these are all just recommendations:

- Think about what kind of introduction you want to have. It could be a catcher, an attention-getter, something that will grab people. But, you don't want to give anything big away. You could start by asking a question that will get their minds thinking or even pull them out of their comfort zone.
- Jokes always work well (if they are good) and it is important to establish a good rapport with your audience. It is important, though, to give an overview of what you are going to be talking about.
- The most important part of your presentation is the body, the main message. This can be chronological, in order of importance, or just generally jumping around. However, if you do jump around, be careful as often times you will lose your audience.
- Ask questions and involve the audience. Sometimes homelessness can seem so far away from some people, it is effective to present things to them in ways they might understand. It engages them, keeps them alert, and allows them to establish a more personal connection with you.
- Your conclusion should be very definitive as well. You should summarize what you have talked about, and then end creatively. A call to action is always good, challenge people, and get them to think about how they are going to get involved.
- Go over mentally the main points you want to cover. There are a few things that are really important to get across, and you want to make sure you don't forget them. It is fine if you want to use notes.
- Beforehand, it might be of help to write your stories or presentations down. This is just a good way to organize what otherwise may be a lot of information so that it could be presented in a logical way.

## **Speakers' Bureau Moderator Script**

Hi My Name is (say your name) and I volunteer with the National Coalition for the Homeless as (describe what you do) NCH is the nation's oldest and largest grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to ending homelessness. Founded in 1982, we focus on four main issues (affordable housing, health care, living wage and civil rights). We do this through lobbying, legislation, advocacy public education, and community organizing work.

*How many people by show of hands know somebody who is or has been homeless?*

*How many people have ever volunteered at a meal program, food bank or shelter?*

*When you think of a homeless person what comes to mind?*

Students could say (lazy, uneducated, mentally ill, alcoholics, drug addicts, homeless by choice)

People become homeless for many reasons (natural disasters, fires, family problems, domestic violence, runaways-foster care system, loss of job, mental illness, substance abuse, no health insurance, lack of affordable housing, lack of a living wage, etc)

What do you do if you see someone on the street?

- A) give food
- B) give money
- C) say hello, smile
- D) ignore them and just walk by

Check out NCH's website for current statistics about homelessness in the U.s.

67,000 veterans were homeless in 2011

**Introduce the speakers (10-15 mins each)**

Any questions? - Facilitate Q & A –let speakers answer questions as much as possible

Questions are to be addressed to the moderator who will choose the speaker to answer