

NATIONAL SOLIDARITY WEEK

#NC#SolidarityWeek August 3– August 10, 2024



2024

MANUAL

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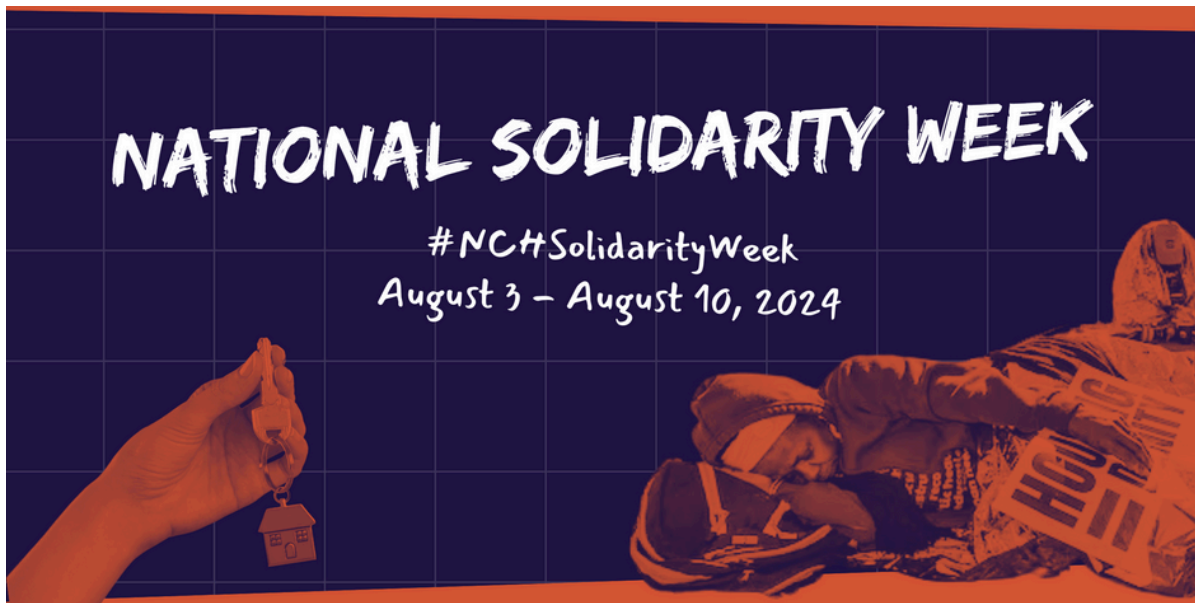
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Megan, as Deputy Director at the National Coalition for the Homeless, not only oversees the organization but also collaborates as an editor and graphic design, contributing to the creation of reports aimed at advancing our understanding of the homelessness crisis through statistical data.

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DATES: AUGUST 3 - AUGUST 10, 2024

National Solidarity Week is a week of active solidarity. It goes beyond mere awareness, serving as a powerful movement that fuels advocacy and fosters education on the harmful impacts of the Grants Pass verdict, which criminalizes homelessness.

The Grants Pass decision has been a hard blow. We need to rise and serve the people that will be impacted the most by this decision. This experience goes beyond raising awareness. It aims to help participants deeply understand the harsh realities that those experiencing homelessness face daily. By standing in solidarity and learning directly from those affected, we can drive substantial change.

National Solidarity Week seeks to foster deep empathy and understanding for those facing the harsh reality of homelessness daily. More than just an awareness campaign; it is an empowering movement that drives advocacy and promotes education about the systemic issues contributing to homelessness.

Join us in taking a stand, magnifying voices, and striving to create a society where everyone has a home. Together, we can make a significant impact.

Who Should Participate?

This event unequivocally welcomes everyone—advocates, individuals with first-hand experience of homelessness, and community members who care. It's a powerful platform to disseminate information, exchange ideas with families, friends, and neighbors, thereby forging a united front against homelessness. It underscores our firm belief that we possess the resources needed to guarantee everyone a safe place to live—No one should go without housing.

Visit the official website: Nationalhomeless.org/nationalsolidarityweek

The Driving Force Behind Our Actions

In one of the wealthiest countries globally, over 582,000 individuals were experiencing homelessness on a single night in 2022. This situation is unacceptable.

Homelessness is not an insurmountable issue; with the right resources and policies, everyone can have a safe place to live. We need to ignite:

- **Immediate Action:** We must allocate all McKinney-Vento Funds to tackle current homelessness and transition PSH renewals to mainstream Section 8/voucher programs.
- **Long-term Solutions:** We should invest in affordable housing, reversing decades of detrimental housing policies.

By taking part, you are actively participating in the community's collective effort to combat this social issue, thereby making a significant difference in the lives of those affected. We advocate for peaceful protests and awareness activities to drive tangible and lasting change.



Congratulations on deciding to participate in the National Solidarity Week! We greatly appreciate your advocacy and commitment to helping bring awareness to homelessness.

This manual is an essential resource for ensuring a successful and impactful event. It provides comprehensive details and guidelines to help you understand the core of this campaign, equipping you with the necessary tools to make a difference.

We urge all community members interested in participating in the *National Solidarity Week* event to use this manual as a guide for successful execution. Our goal is to provide all communities with the tools needed to participate in this week of solidarity, beginning with understanding the heart of the movement.

PURPOSE

National Solidarity Week will be dedicated to education and advocacy efforts surrounding the impact of the Grants Pass decision and the criminalization of homelessness.

Our advocacy will take various forms, such as Twitter storms, Instagram posts, and other social media content highlighting the ramifications of the Grants Pass decision, local criminalization statistics, and ordinances. Additionally, we encourage direct, hands-on service, like distributing water, sunscreen, and hats to help individuals cope with the summer heat.

The items distributed should be based on the specific needs of your community. If your organization or community is hosting events or creating posts related to the criminalization or support of the unhoused community, please use the hashtag **#NCHSolidarityWeek** to emphasize the collective spirit of this initiative.

The Grants Pass decision has placed the responsibility on grassroots organizations to demonstrate to the courts and society that we are committed to supporting the community, despite ongoing efforts to criminalize and dehumanize those experiencing homelessness.

This powerful event has a substantial aim: to raise awareness that no one should be criminalized for being unhoused.

National Solidarity Week seeks to foster deep empathy and understanding for those facing the harsh reality of homelessness daily. It is more than just an awareness campaign; it is an empowering movement that drives advocacy and promotes education about the systemic issues contributing to homelessness.

During this week, we aim to inspire both individual actions and collective efforts to address these critical issues.

The overarching objective is to firmly assert that everyone deserves housing. This encompasses:

- **Enhancing Awareness and Empathy:** Our aim is to enhance public awareness of the challenges faced by homeless individuals and families, fostering greater empathy.
- **Promoting Advocacy and Education:** We strive to educate participants about homelessness issues, empowering them to advocate for policy changes and community support.
- **Fostering Community Building:** We endeavor to cultivate a sense of solidarity among participants and communities, emphasizing collective responsibility in addressing homelessness.
- **Inspiring Action and Impact:** We aspire to motivate tangible actions, such as advocating for affordable housing solutions, to affect meaningful change in our communities.

National Solidarity Week is more than just an awareness campaign; it is an empowering movement that drives advocacy and promotes education about the detrimental effects of the Grants Pass verdict, which criminalizes homelessness.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES



For those planning to participate in National Solidarity Week, we have assembled essential guidelines for organizing community events. These guidelines are designed to help you effectively plan and execute successful events or social media posts. Carefully curated, these recommendations ensure your event runs smoothly and achieves its goals. By adhering to these guidelines, you can create a meaningful and impactful experience for all participants.

Registration: To help amplify local efforts, please visit the National Coalition for the Homeless website and [register your event](#). This will allow us to list your event on our website and feature it on our official page. Visit the official website to access additional resources: [Nationalhomeless.org/nationalsolidarityweek](https://nationalhomeless.org/nationalsolidarityweek).

Participation: We welcome advocates, individuals interested in social justice, community members, and anyone passionate who wishes to contribute to positive social change.

Early Planning: Recruit others to join your planning efforts. Involve homeless/formerly homeless individuals, students, faculty, and community members to ensure diverse perspectives and effective organization.

Support: An integral part of our initiative involves soliciting support from the community. This includes reaching out to local businesses and respectfully requesting donations or sponsorships. These funds or resources can greatly assist in our mission. Additionally, we should consider partnering with like-minded organizations such as Food Not Bombs and Habitat for Humanity. Their co-sponsorship can provide added visibility and resources and impact our cause.

Organizing Activities: Devote time to the organization of group discussions. These sessions will offer a platform for all participants to voice their thoughts and engage in meaningful dialogue, fostering a sense of community and mutual understanding. For example, to further emphasize and draw attention to our cause, you can organize a vigil. This solemn event could serve as a powerful symbol of unity and determination. Alternatively, a march could be organized. This public demonstration is an impactful way to make our voices heard and to highlight the importance of our cause.

Location: If you choose to organize an event, it is recommended to hold it in a central location within your community. This approach can potentially maximize visibility and community engagement, ensuring a meaningful impact.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Schedule: *National Solidarity Week* starts Saturday, August 3rd - Saturday, August 10th. Participants will engage in various activities, including discussions, educational sessions, and reflections, culminating in a shared experience aimed at deepening understanding and commitment to ending homelessness online or in person.

Event Rules and Logistics: Post and announce event rules within your network. Remember, we're a no-drugs and alcohol-free group, we cherish respect for all viewpoints, and we stick together on-site. Please provide a clear rundown of the agenda, along with the people who will be in charge, including information about restroom facilities, indoor options, food availability, and first aid stations. Consider setting up a donation container too.

Communications & Social Media: If you have events or posts ready to be shared during this week, please opt to participate in *National Solidarity Week* and include the hashtag, #NationalSolidarityWeek, in your social media outreach and all external communications. This approach not only unifies our efforts but also makes it easier for us to track the event. It enables communities to follow the hashtag, support events nationwide, and amplify the voices involved.

Additionally, consider using the [Social Media Toolkit](#) to download branded event posters for sharing on social media platforms. The National Coalition for the Homeless has provided captions for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Feel free to copy and paste the captions into your posts during the week of action, which runs from Saturday, August 3rd - Saturday, August 10th.

Mindful Preparation: If you're hosting a community event, be mindful of what you or your guests bring. Consider the reality of homelessness; avoid items or luxuries that homeless individuals may not have access to. Limit technology use and refrain from ordering alcoholic beverages or mind-altering substances.

Donations: Consider bringing supplies to donate to the unhoused. Items that provide comfort are greatly appreciated by those experiencing homelessness.

Community Involvement: Contact local shelters or homeless advocates to invite homeless individuals to participate in your event. Engaging their perspectives enriches the experience and promotes empathy.

Music and Atmosphere: Invite local musicians to perform. Music has the power to unite and create a supportive atmosphere.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Speakers: For community events, it is important to invite individuals who have personally experienced homelessness. Their stories and perspectives are invaluable. Also, community leaders who are actively involved in addressing homelessness should be included. Residents from various neighborhoods can bring their unique insights and concerns to the table. Furthermore, having spokespersons from different organizations and agencies can help bridge the gap between different community sectors and foster understanding and collaboration.

Education and Awareness: Distribute fact sheets and information about homelessness to educate participants and foster informed discussions.

Media Engagement: Invite local media to cover the event, raising awareness and amplifying the message about homelessness in your community. Talking points will be provided.

Group Discussions: Allocate time for group discussions on homelessness, housing issues, and poverty criminalization in your community or nationwide. Provide paper and pencils for participants to jot down ideas and promote future initiatives.

Voter Registration: Ensure all participants are registered to vote and informed about candidates running for office who support initiatives addressing homelessness and poverty. The National Coalition for the Homeless offers a comprehensive voter registration guide, including a toolkit for your convenience. Feel free to share this information with your network: <https://nationalhomeless.org/voting/>

Wrap-Up: Appoint a committee to draft a group resolution based on the discussions that night. Establish a common ground for participants who would like to take future action. Collect names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of people for future reference and provide access to information on local service sites.

SAMPLE EVENT AGENDA

2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

- Arrival and Registration
- Gather participants and provide transportation for homeless and formerly homeless guests

2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

- Welcome and Opening Remarks
- Introduction to the event's goals and schedule

3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

- Speaker Session I
 - Topics: Homelessness Statistics, Systemic Issues, and Advocacy
 - Q&A Session

4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

- Break
 - Refreshments and light snacks

4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

- Educational Workshop
 - Interactive session on community support and resources
 - Participation activities and group discussions

5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

- Performance Arts
 - Music, poetry, and artistic performances by local artists
 - Focus on themes related to homelessness and community

6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

- Dinner
 - Serve a meal and provide an opportunity for informal networking

7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

- Speaker Session II
 - Topics: Personal Stories of Overcoming Homelessness, Policy Changes, and Future Steps
 - Q&A Session

8:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

- Break
 - Coffee and dessert
 - Information on future actions and events

9:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

- Candlelight Vigil and Music
 - Reflective session to honor those affected by homelessness
- Musical performances

10:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

- Discussion Groups
 - Break into smaller groups for deeper conversations
 - Facilitated discussions on various topics

11:00 p.m. - 11:30 p.m.

- Late Night Food Line
 - Additional refreshments and snacks

11:30 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.

- Closing Remarks and Wrap-Up
- Summarize key points and takeaways
- Thank participants and provide



WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL SOLIDARITY WEEK

There are many ways for you or your organization to participate in National Solidarity Week. We encourage everyone to contribute in a way that suits them best; every effort, no matter how big or small, can make a significant difference.

Below are just a few examples of the many options available to you.

Organize Community Outreach Events: Host events such as food drives, clothing donations, or hygiene kit assemblies to directly support those in need within your community.

Educational Workshops and Panels: Arrange workshops or panel discussions to educate the public about homelessness, its causes, and how to effectively advocate for change.

Social Media Campaigns: Join the National Coalition for the Homeless in our social media campaign by using the hashtag **#NCHSolidarityWeek** to raise awareness about homelessness. Share stories, statistics, and ways people can help, and encourage your network to spread the message. We've provided a toolkit where you can access graphics, infographics, and captions for your social media initiatives. Visit our website for more information about the time and dates for our Twitter/X social media storm.

Backyard Potluck: Set up a tent with your family, talk with kids about what it feels like to not have a home. This unique experience can serve as a practical, hands-on lesson about the difficulties and challenges that homeless individuals face on a daily basis. Use this opportunity to educate your children and other family members about the realities of not having a home. Discuss the reasons why people might find themselves in such situations and the resources that are, or aren't, available to them.

By creating a safe space for these conversations, you can foster empathy and understanding within your family while raising awareness about a significant societal issue.

Community Potluck: One impactful way to facilitate a dialog about homelessness is to host a community potluck in your area. This is an opportunity to bring together local elected officials, neighbors, and other community members in a casual, welcoming environment. By inviting your local representatives, you can directly voice your concerns and discuss potential solutions to them.

Moreover, engaging with your neighbors and friends can help foster meaningful, enlightening conversations that promote understanding and awareness of homelessness. This event can serve as an avenue to dispel misconceptions, share personal stories, and brainstorm communal efforts to address this pressing issue.

WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL SOLIDARITY WEEK

Volunteer Your Time: Volunteering at shelters, soup kitchens, or outreach programs is a direct way to support homeless individuals. Volunteers can help with meal preparation and distribution, administrative tasks, mentoring, or organizing donation drives. Your time and skills can provide much-needed support to these organizations.

Fundraising: You can fundraise for the homeless through options like bake sales, school campaigns, or crowdfunding. You can also donate on social media or support candidates who share your values on homelessness.

Donate to local shelters or non-profits: Donate to local shelters or non-profits: Donating money, especially on a recurring basis, can make a significant impact. Financial contributions provide these organizations with the resources they need to offer essential services, such as food, shelter, medical care, and job training. Regular donations help ensure a steady flow of support, allowing shelters and non-profits to plan and sustain their programs more effectively.

Additionally, many organizations offer options to direct your donation towards specific initiatives, so you can support the causes that matter most to you. Your generosity can help create lasting change in the lives of those in need.

Show kindness to those living on the street: While it may seem small, you'll be surprised how often those experiencing homelessness are ignored and rejected in society. Even a simple gesture like offering a smile can go a long way for someone in need of kindness. Building relationships and offering kindness can significantly impact someone experiencing homelessness.

Simple gestures like a friendly conversation, or acknowledging their presence can restore dignity and provide emotional support. Additionally, connecting homeless individuals with local resources and services can help them navigate their way to stability.

Support Employment Initiatives: Help homeless individuals gain employment by supporting job training programs and social enterprises that offer job opportunities. You can also assist with resume building, job searches, and interview preparation. Encouraging local businesses to hire individuals experiencing homelessness can also make a difference.

Advocate and Raise Awareness: Use your voice to advocate for policies that support the homeless. Contact local representatives, participate in or organize awareness campaigns, and use social media to spread information about homelessness. Educating others about the issues and advocating for systemic change can lead to long-term solutions.

WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL SOLIDARITY WEEK

These are just a few ways you can observe National Solidarity Week, but feel free to get creative with your initiatives. The most important thing is to dedicate this week to active solidarity with the National Coalition for the Homeless. We invite advocates across the country to step up, serve their communities, and amplify their efforts through social media advocacy and education.

While the Grants Pass decision was detrimental to the unhoused and criminalized them for not having a safe place to sleep, this week is our opportunity to rise and serve those impacted by this decision. This experience goes beyond raising awareness; it aims to help participants deeply understand the harsh realities that those experiencing homelessness face daily. By standing in solidarity and learning directly from those affected, we can drive substantial change.

Thank you for taking a stand, amplifying voices, and striving to create a society where everyone has a home. Together, we can make a significant impact.

The National Solidarity Week is a transformative experience designed to empower individuals and communities in the fight against homelessness, promoting a future where everyone has a safe and secure place to call home.

For more information, contact the National Coalition for the Homeless at (202) 462-4822
E-mail: info@nationalhomeless.org

Visit the official website: [Nationalhomeless.org/nationalsolidarityweek](https://nationalhomeless.org/nationalsolidarityweek)

THE NATIONAL SOLIDARITY WEEK IS MORE THAN AN EVENT; IT'S A POWERFUL MOVEMENT.

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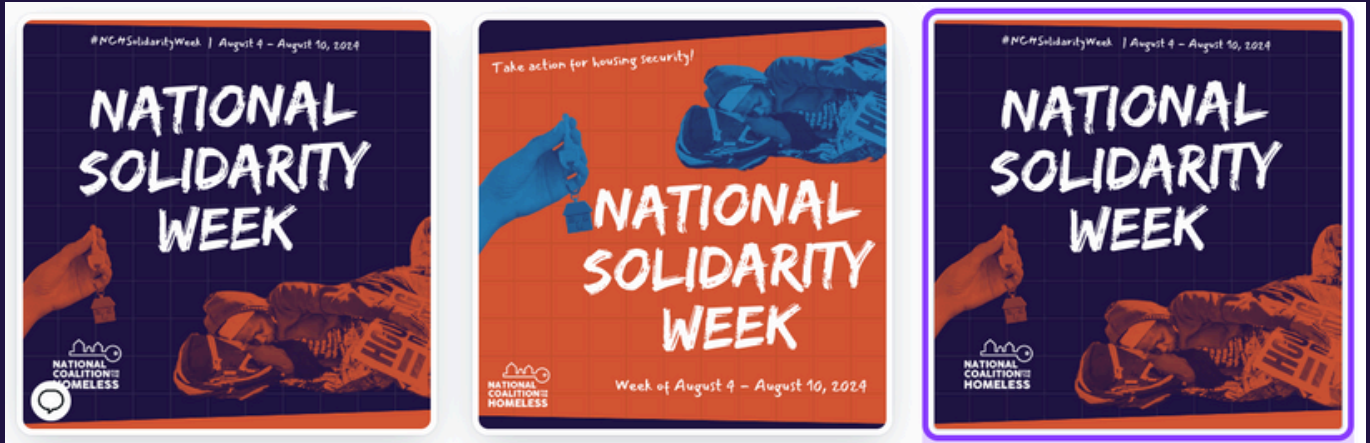
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Visit the official website to access resources and downloadable graphics

[Nationalhomeless.org/nationalsolidarityweek](https://nationalhomeless.org/nationalsolidarityweek)

