

The Role Homeless Service Providers Play in Solving Infant and Toddler Homelessness

We know that approximately

450,000

infants and toddlers experience homelessness in the US.

~70,000

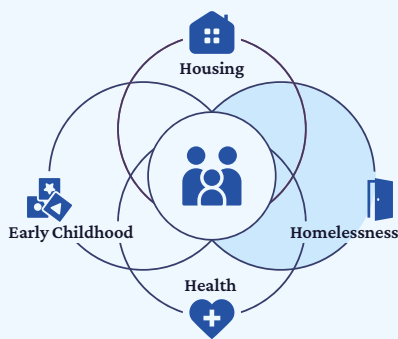
babies are born to parents who experienced homelessness during pregnancy.



Homelessness during pregnancy or in the first three years of a child's life has lifelong consequences on physical health and mental well-being.

Homelessness in early childhood—an adverse childhood experience—can lead to developmental delays, physical and mental health issues, and lasting effects on well-being.

We know that the first three years of a child's life are critical to brain development. If we act early we can prevent and solve homelessness and mitigate the resulting trauma.



The solution

There's an opportunity to ensure all infants, toddlers, expectant parents, and their families have access to stable, secure housing and the services they need to thrive.

Those who serve families experiencing homelessness are essential—meeting immediate needs today while building a future where every baby has a safe and stable home.

Homeless service providers play a crucial role in meeting immediate needs, connecting families to resources, and shaping policies that ensure no baby is left homeless. Even small shifts in practice and policy within homeless services can spark generational change.

When early childhood, health, homeless, and housing services work together, families with young children can get the help they need more quickly, with less stress, and see better long-term outcomes. To drive meaningful progress, homeless service providers can take action in three key ways:

Act now to meet the urgent needs of babies

Families with infants, toddlers, or those expecting a child can't wait. Homeless service providers are often the first point of contact, offering critical support such as safe shelter, developmental screenings, nutrition, early childhood referrals, and case management. Acting quickly ensures babies and their families receive immediate safety and stability while connecting them to the services that change long-term outcomes.

Champion policies that put infants and toddlers first

Service providers can help shape policies that remove barriers for families experiencing homelessness. This means advocating for expanded access to family emergency shelter and transitional housing, permanent affordable housing, prenatal care, early childhood programs, and integrated health services. By lifting up the needs of infants, toddlers, and expectant parents, homeless service providers can ensure these families are prioritized in local, state, and federal policy decisions.

Collaborate across sectors to build lasting solutions

Preventing and solving infant and toddler homelessness takes all of us. Service providers must partner across the homeless, housing, early childhood, and health care systems. Lasting impact depends on deep, cross-sector partnerships that provide families and babies with seamless, coordinated support from the very beginning.