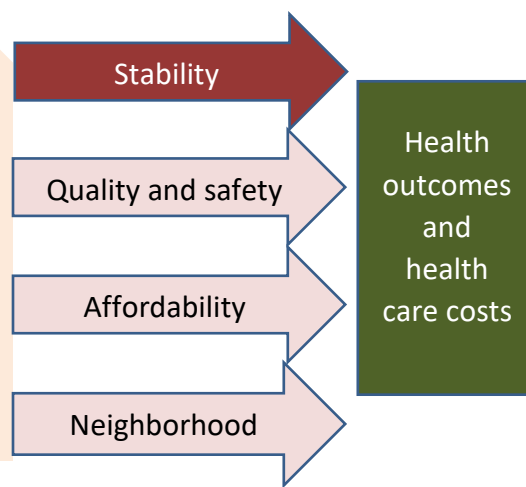


Housing as a Social Determinant of Health: Stability

How is housing related to health?

This resource guide focuses on how housing stability is related to health. Housing instability can include moving frequently, falling behind on rent, and couch surfing. People who are chronically homeless experience higher morbidity for both physical and mental health, as well as increased mortality.

Review more at: [HEART Learning Community – Housing](#) and [Housing And Health | Health Affairs](#)



Housing stability and homelessness

Homelessness is a significant public health problem in the United States. This is due to the fact that those experiencing homelessness have high rates of chronic physical and mental health conditions, co-occurring disorders, recurring use of emergency services leading to higher treatment costs, and barriers to health care and affordable housing.

Strategies

Evidence-based strategies¹ to address homelessness by increasing housing options access and services include:

- [Housing First](#) model
- Housing subsidies, such as [vouchers](#) and [rental assistance](#)
- [Permanent supportive housing](#)
- National Housing Trust Fund
- [Increasing income support](#)
- Homelessness prevention programs
- Constructive alternatives to the criminalization of homelessness

Read more about these strategies:

1. [Housing and Homelessness as a Public Health Issue](#)

[Fact Sheet: The Public Health Implications of Housing Instability, Eviction, and Homelessness](#)

Case study: Boston

Housing stability and maternal health

The Boston Public Health Commission identified that housing insecurity had a major impact on stress, birth outcomes, and maternal health. In partnership with the Boston Housing Authority, a program was started that gave priority public housing to homeless and housing-insecure pregnant women who have medical risks associated with poor birth outcomes.

After identifying housing as a social determinant of health through home visits, the team established three health equity goals to reduce health outcome gaps between residents of Color and White residents for birth rates, obesity/overweight, and chlamydia.

Learn how they worked to achieve these goals by reading [Boston Uses Public Housing to Promote Healthy Birth Outcomes](#).



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH SERVICES**

Division of Public Health

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Case study: Michigan Equity in housing

A local health department in Michigan worked to integrate health equity into its housing plan by:

- Engaging most impacted communities, especially immigrants, refugees, seniors, rural residents and the homeless.
- Providing resources and support for residents to advocate for their legal rights.
- Creating internal positions at the health department that focus on equity and environmental justice.
- Building internal capacity for applying a health lens to housing projects and building strong relationships with housing sector partners.
- Educating partner organizations on SDOH.
- Raising awareness about health and housing with local and state policymakers.

The complete [Michigan case study](#) provides more information.



State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)

One of the SHIP priorities is healthy housing. It contains strategies with sample activities related to improving accessibility of housing such as:

Strategies	Sample activities
Support transition into stable housing for people experiencing homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Implement housing first policies for unhoused people experiencing substance use disorder, mental health concerns, and other barriers to becoming housed.- Create and expand housing navigation and case management service for people experiencing or at risk for homelessness.- Require landlords to treat all sources of rent payment equally (for example, vouchers, emergency assistance).
Improve supports for people who are housed to remain in stable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fund sustainable statewide emergency rental and mortgage assistance programs.- Provide publicly funded civil legal service to help renters address housing concerns (for example, eviction proceedings, housing quality or safety issues).- Fund programming to assist low-income individuals with housing repairs to maintain a safe home environment.
Create equitable housing rental and ownership processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fund grant and other down payment support mechanisms designed to eliminate inequitable access to homebuying funding needs.- Limit the types of sociodemographic information a landlord may obtain to consider a prospective tenant.- Provide free and widely accessible financial and homebuying education programs.

Find more at [Wisconsin State Health Plan](#).

Partnerships

Want to work with partners but don't know how?

Multisector community partnerships (MCPs) are a key component of the public health strategy for addressing social determinants of health (SDOH) and promoting health equity. Health departments can support MCPs' SDOH initiatives by:

- Providing funding.
- Providing technical assistance.
- Sharing data with partners.
- Connecting community organizations with shared missions.

Read more [about multisector partnerships](#) and see the table on key findings.

Housing Solutions Collaborative

ChangeLab Solutions started the Housing Solutions Collaborative, a team that built partnerships to advance housing and health equity in their communities. [Watch these three videos](#) on how they addressed housing instability and affordability issues and the lessons they learned. It includes teams from Wisconsin, Kentucky, and Oklahoma.