

1 *Resolution on Ending Homelessness*

2 *2019 Five-year policy review*

3 **WHEREAS** safe, stable, affordable, accessible, and permanent housing is a human right, and its
4 absence negatively impacts typical development, physical, and mental health functioning,
5 nutrition, social, and emotional wellbeing, employment and training opportunities, academic
6 success, family cohesion, and the ability to exercise individual rights and responsibilities (e.g.,
7 United Nations General Assembly, Report of Special Reporter A/73/310/REV.1; U.S.
8 Conference of Mayors Report on Housing and Homelessness, 2016);

9 **WHEREAS** housing instability and homelessness are matters of public health concern due to the
10 lifelong deleterious impact on individuals and families as well as the staggering burden of
11 societal costs (e.g., Krieger & Higgins, 2002; Schnazer, Dominguez, Shrout, & Caton, 2007);

12 **WHEREAS** populations that have historically been marginalized and discriminated against are
13 disproportionately impacted by the lack of affordable, accessible, safe, and stable housing and
14 are least likely to benefit from neighborhood revitalization and economic recovery. Such
15 oppressed groups include: those living in poverty or of low socio-economic status; persons of
16 color, ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees; disabled persons with cognitive, physical,
17 and/or mental health challenges; single mothers with children; older adults; unaccompanied
18 youth some of whom are gay, lesbian, transgendered, nonbinary, or queer; emerging adults
19 transitioning from foster care, juvenile justice, or child welfare settings; victims of interpersonal
20 violence; persons returning to communities following incarceration; and veterans (e.g.,
21 Dworsky, Napolitano, & Courtney, 2013; Greenberg & Rosencheck, 2008; Stone, Dowling &
22 Cameron, 2018; McCann & Brown, 2019; McCann & Brown, 2019);

23 **WHEREAS** oppressed groups are disproportionately impacted by housing destruction due to
24 natural disasters; inequitable wages; under-employment; insufficient income; higher rates of
25 unemployment; gentrification; job loss due to plant shut downs and job relocations; financial
26 scams; predatory lending and subprime loans; discriminatory leasing practices; and inaccessible
27 or unaffordable public transportation, all of which contribute to housing instability and
28 homelessness (Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016);

29 **WHEREAS** in times of economic downturn, job loss, and high rates of underemployment and
30 unemployment, more persons in urban, suburban, and rural areas lose their homes or are at risk
31 of homelessness (e.g., U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2009; U.S. Department of Housing and
32 Urban Development, 2008); and where people of color are especially vulnerable and at risk
33 (Manneh, 2008);

34 **WHEREAS** persons living in poverty are disproportionately at risk across the lifespan for the
35 neuro-psychological, developmental, cognitive, social, emotional, and health consequences of
36 toxic exposures, unclean water, inadequate food, unhealthy living spaces and crowded
37 conditions, air pollution, and environmental injustices, and are more likely to be displaced by
38 natural disasters and the outcomes of climate change (Davis, Oswald, & Mitchell, 2009; Henning

39 et al., 2018; Hornberg & Pauli, 2007; Hoover et al., 2012; Levy & Patz, 2015; Prochaska et al.,
40 2014; Shonkoff & Garner, 2012; Suk et al. 2016);

41 **WHEREAS** homelessness results from structural and systemic barriers and social injustices; the
42 lack of safe and affordable housing; high costs of food, childcare, transportation, and utilities;
43 insufficient supportive community services, including those targeted to treat mental health and
44 substance disorders; under-funded schools ill equipped to prepare students for academic or
45 vocational success; scarce job training programs; limited early childcare and after school
46 programs to support working families; inadequate wages; job layoffs and under-employment
47 (e.g., Bosman, 2009; National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2009, 2010; National Coalition for
48 the Homeless, 2009; Rafferty & Shinn, 1991; Zlotnick, Robertson, & Lahiff, 1999);

49 **WHEREAS** psychosocial stressors that impact physical, social-emotional, and behavioral health
50 functioning are often associated with entrance into and exit from homelessness, and where rapid
51 and supportive housing as well as expanded access to culturally competent, community-based
52 prevention, intervention and treatment services, along with structural changes, contributes to the
53 remediation of homelessness (e.g., Burt et al., 1999; Burt, Person, & Montgomery, 2007; Haber
54 & Toro, 2004; Morse et al., 1996);

55 **WHEREAS** the field of psychology is uniquely poised to contribute to the amelioration of
56 homelessness through scientific research, program design and evaluation, empirically supported
57 trauma sensitive interventions, education and job training, advocacy, and culturally competent
58 assessment and treatment of persons across the life span who are without homes or are at risk of
59 homelessness (e.g., Guarino, 2014; Haber & Toro, 2004; Shinn, 1992);

60 And **WHEREAS** psychologists aspire to promote the human rights and dignity of all persons,
61 through the creation of equal opportunities for work, physical, emotional, and behavioral well-
62 being, especially for those who are marginalized and most vulnerable.

63 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Council of Representatives of the American
64 Psychological Association reaffirm its commitment to advance psychology's contributions to
65 ending homelessness and supports the following:

66 Research efforts directed towards the prevention of homelessness among marginalized and
67 vulnerable populations; evidence-based intervention plans for those currently experiencing
68 homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness; applied research on service utilization among
69 populations at risk for homelessness; and the evaluation and assessment of programs that support
70 rapid and permanent housing.

71 Investigation of methods and interventions to promote resilience in different populations at risk
72 for homelessness including those within rural, suburban, urban areas, single female and male
73 heads of household with children, unaccompanied youth (including lesbian, gay, bisexual and
74 transgender youth), emerging adults (e.g., youth aging out of foster care system and leaving the
75 juvenile justice system), people of color, refugees and immigrants, adults reentering communities
76 following incarceration, older adults, persons with disabilities (including physical, cognitive, and

77 mental health conditions), and veterans. Recognition that success based on scientific findings
78 may require a change of policy, as well as program rules and procedures.

79 Focus on training and educational practices that enhance the cultural competency and trauma
80 sensitivity of psychologists in order to effectively work with populations currently, or at risk of,
81 homelessness. Such practices include expansion of graduate school curricula focused on the
82 ways in which harmful stereotypes and individualistic attributions are culturally constructed and
83 hold the potential to influence service provisions; enhancing training to include diverse and
84 underserved populations; creating internships and continuing education that encourage
85 psychologists to work with populations experiencing homelessness; enlisting psychologists to
86 offer appropriate mental health education programs focused on the remediation of homelessness
87 to service providers, community-based organizations, community volunteers, and the public.

88 Psychologists promote vocational training, decent work and fair and equitable remuneration for
89 all people.

90 Encourage psychologists to provide strength-based clinical assessment services to populations
91 who are or at risk of homelessness. Culturally competent services address a continuum of needs,
92 focus on serving people in the communities in which they and their families live, and take into
93 consideration how specific structural/systemic issues intersect and interact in different
94 combinations and in discrete ways for specific populations. Psychologists are encouraged to
95 establish meaningful collaborations with physicians, nurses, social workers, educators, service
96 providers, community organizations, outreach services, and advocates committed to addressing
97 the multifaceted needs of persons who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing their
98 homes.

99 Promotion and advocacy for policies and legislation that support the rapid reentry of persons into
100 stable, safe, affordable, and permanent housing including:

- 101 • Comprehensive services, as well as safe, stable, affordable, less restrictive, and accessible
102 housing in urban, suburban, and rural areas.
- 103 • Targeted comprehensive services, such as, education and job training opportunities for
104 youth in foster care, and for transitional services for those returning to home placement
105 and/or communities.
- 106 • Education, job training, and affordable day care to support families, including but not
107 limited to low income families
- 108 • Health care coverage for those without homes and at risk of losing stable housing.
- 109 • Increase programs and services in mental health, substance abuse, and alcohol
110 dependency prevention and treatment.
- 111 • Public funds to support emergency responses to homelessness and implement
112 preventative programs to reduce the incidence and prevalence of homeless persons and
113 families.
- 114 • Stricter regulations governing financial institutions, predatory lending, credit, and
115 mortgage practices.

- 116 • Dissemination of accurate information about homelessness to psychologists,
117 policymakers, and the public in an effort to call attention to the structural/systemic issues
118 that exacerbate homelessness.
119 • Both psychological (e.g., clinical) and structural/systemic interventions for those
120 suffering the consequences of poverty and homelessness.

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122 **References**

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