

Homelessness is a policy choice. So is ending it.

Understand the root causes of homelessness

Where does homelessness begin?

A brief summary of the primary causes of homelessness in California, key facts surrounding housing affordability and wages, and the steps you can take today to make an impact.

Getting to the roots

While each person's story is unique, many Californians fall into homelessness for the following reasons:



Rising rent & housing costs



Stagnant wages



Insufficient affordable & supportive housing



Exclusionary zoning

→ Rising housing costs

80% of people making less than 30% of their area's median income spend **more than half** of their income on housing, and **none** can afford the average rent in **any** California county.

→ Stagnant wages

Since 2000, median rent has **increased 35%** while the median income of renters has only **increased by 6%**. And those living on SSI only receive **\$1,040 per month**, **\$560 short** of the average monthly rent.

→ Insufficient affordable & supportive housing

We need affordable homes to prevent extremely low-income Californians from falling into homelessness.

→ Exclusionary zoning

In 1916, white neighborhoods began designating parcels of land for single-family use to prevent Black and Indigenous people from moving in. By 2021 three-quarters of developable land statewide was zoned for single-family housing. As a result, Black and Indigenous Californians have been **disproportionately kept from accessing housing and building wealth**.

Steps you can take

Protect Californians from housing insecurity and help thousands of unhoused people transition into stable homes by advancing policies which increase access to deeply affordable and supportive housing.

Get started

Contact one of the housing organizations behind Homelessness is a Policy Choice to learn how you can take the first step to meaningfully address homelessness in our communities.

