



Targeting Homelessness Prevention in the Midst of COVID-19

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Panelists/Resource Advisors

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Webinar Objectives

- 1) Gain knowledge of the elements of a homelessness prevention strategy.
- 2) Learn approaches to targeting prevention for maximum effectiveness & efficiency
- 3) Provide concrete examples of effective approaches to homelessness prevention at a community level

Overview

- People most likely to be harmed by COVID include people of color, especially Black, Latinx and Indigenous people, those who are elderly, and those who have health problems, especially respiratory problems.
- COVID has also had an economic impact on our communities, including job loss, housing instability, and increased risk of homelessness. These economic effects are also most likely to impact people of color, especially Black, Latinx and Indigenous people.

Focus Today: Targeted Homelessness Prevention

Eviction Prevention is critical, especially with the Eviction Moratorium lifting, though preventing evictions is not equivalent to preventing homelessness.

Consider Treasury's ERAP resources for eviction prevention, and lean on non-traditional partners with community relationships.

Effective and Efficient Targeting: Homelessness Prevention

Prevention programs reduce homelessness when they are both effective and efficient.

Effective interventions help people find and maintain stable housing and avoid homelessness.

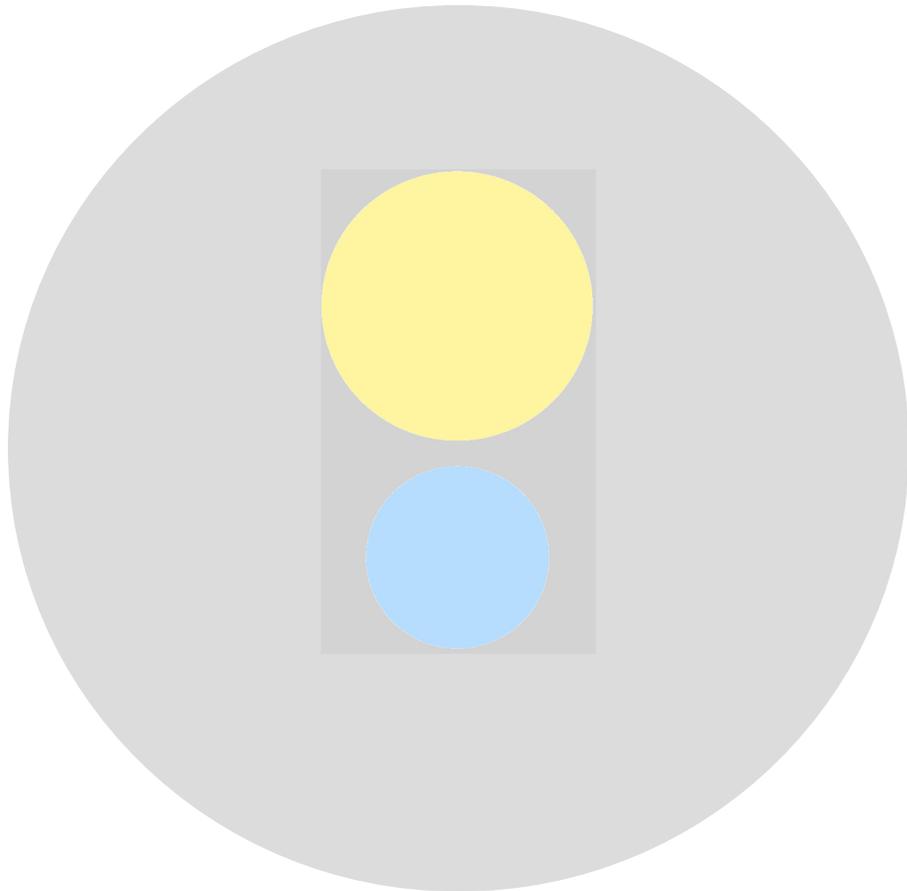
Efficient interventions assist people who would experience homelessness in its absence.

For more information about Effectiveness and Efficiency of homelessness prevention programs, see the [Center for Evidence-Based Solutions to Homelessness](#)

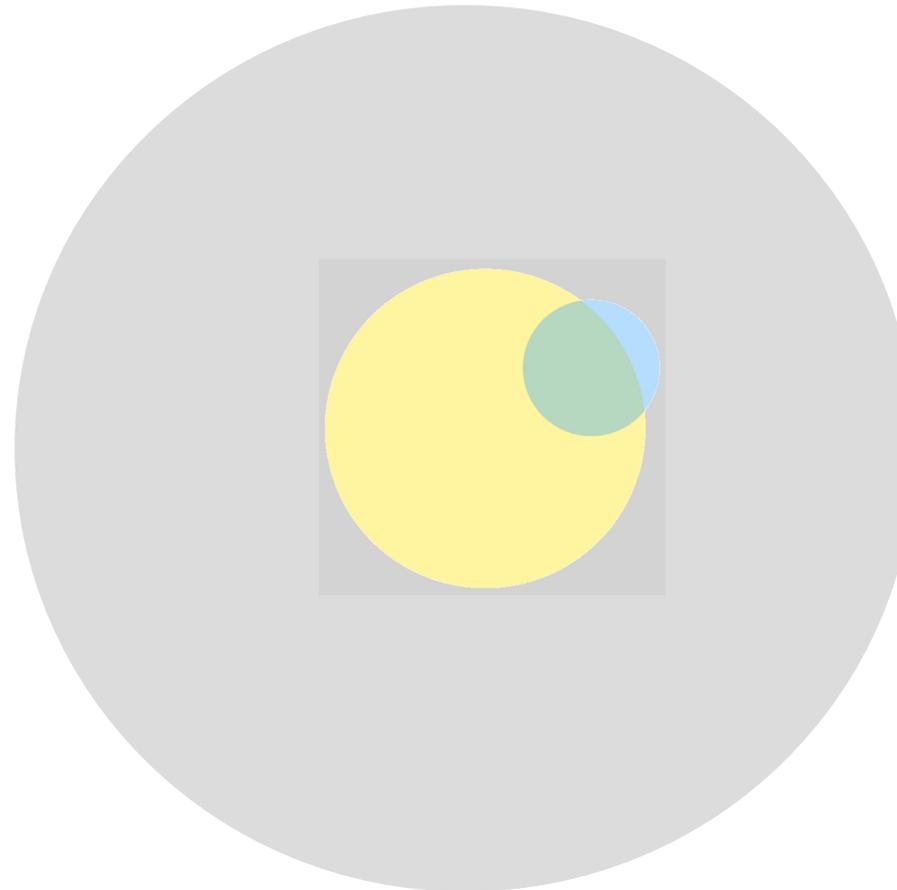


Targeting Prevention that is Effective and Efficient

Example of Inefficient Targeting



Example of Efficient Targeting



Key

-  People at risk of becoming homeless
-  People who will become homeless and seek assistance
-  Targeted Prevention

Framework for Prevention: Types of Prevention

Primary Prevention

Strategies that attempt to mitigate the direct factors that lead to homelessness.

Secondary Prevention

Strategies that help people find safe alternatives when individuals are seeking shelter or are likely to have to stay in an unsheltered location. Also referred to as “diversion.”

Primary Prevention Strategies

Primary Prevention strategies aim to reduce individual and structural risk factors that contribute to homelessness and increase protective factors that shield against homelessness.

Primary Prevention Strategies, continued

Universal Strategies: Provide protection to a broad array of people who might be at risk of homelessness. These include public benefits programs, affordable housing development, and education and employment programs.

Selected Group Strategies: Target assistance to populations at higher risk of homelessness, such as people who live in high poverty neighborhoods or who are exiting from institutional care.

Indicated Group Strategies: Serve people who are likely to have to stay in emergency shelter or unsheltered location because of individual circumstances, or because they have experienced a crisis event (e.g. fleeing DV, having a health problem, being evicted from housing) that is likely to lead to homelessness.



Primary Prevention: Selected Group Strategies

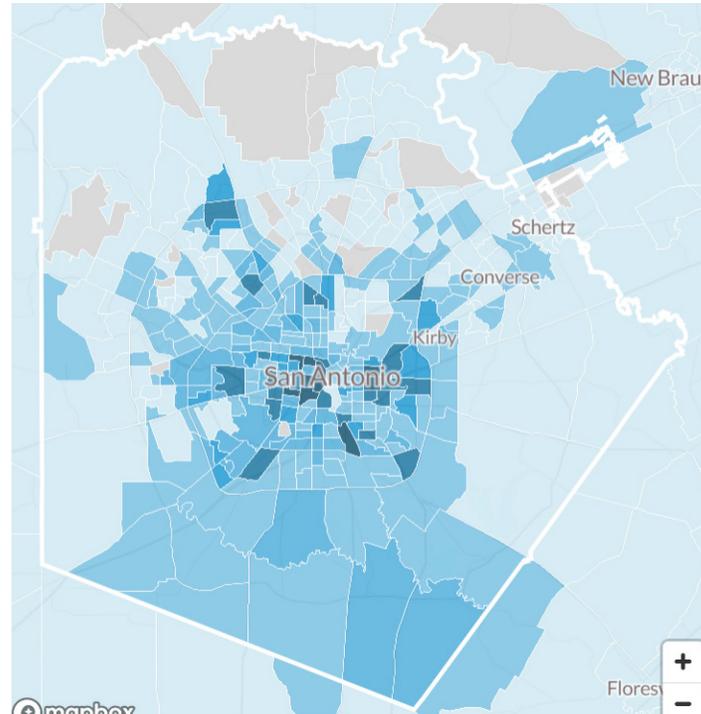
- Goal** Keep marginalized populations housed, targeting assistance to those who likely face significant structural barriers that make loss of housing more likely. If correctly designed, adequately resourced, and informed by people most impacted, these strategies will reduce racial disparities in who experiences homelessness.
- Target Population** Groups or populations with a particularly high risk of homelessness as members of a protected class
- Key Partnerships** People with lived experience, Civil Legal Aid/Eviction Courts, Advocacy organizations and Non-profits primarily led by people of color and primarily serving the selected target population(s)

To have the greatest impact, identify the most disproportionately impacted communities rather than all marginalized populations.

Prevention to Promote Equity

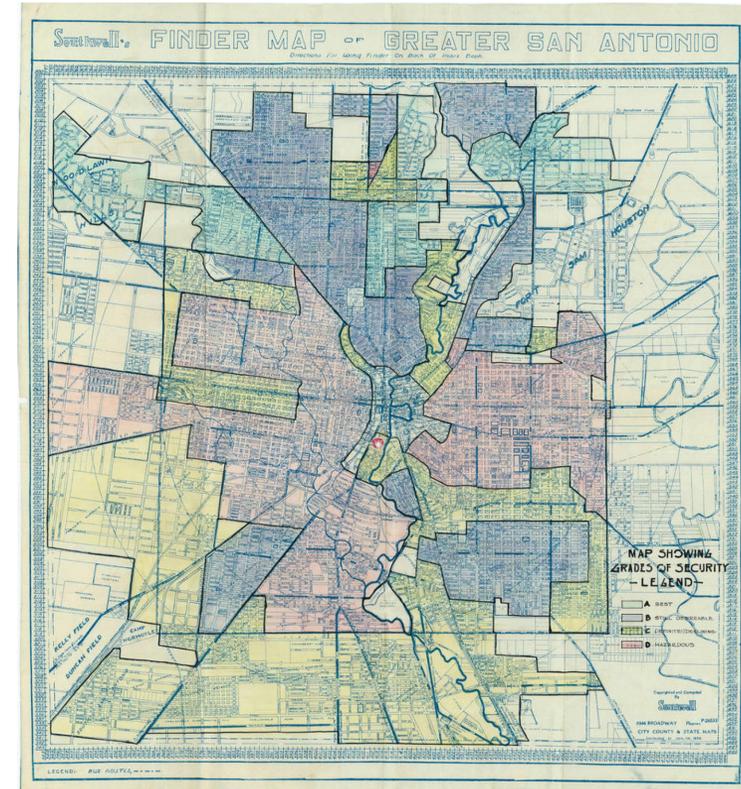
Emergency Rental Assistance Priority Index:

- 1) Housing Instability Risk,
- 2) COVID-19 Impact, and
- 3) Equity



<https://www.urban.org/features/where-prioritize-emergency-rental-assistance-keep-renters-their-homes>

Redlining in Greater San Antonio



<https://coateslibrary.omeka.net/exhibits/show/claudeblack/community/involvement/redlining>



Selected Group Strategies: Examples

NYC Homebase - Uses data to target households most likely to experience homelessness, including geo-coding to identify “hot spots” of shelter demand.

Columbus, OH Community Shelter Board - Uses data to target assistance geographically where there are high proportions of people impacted by racism and poverty

Primary Prevention: Indicated Group Strategies

Goal	Keep people housed who are likely to have a stay in emergency shelter or unsheltered location because of individual circumstances. Most efficient at preventing homelessness and often require the use of an assessment tool to determine who is most likely to experience homelessness.
Target Population	Those most likely to experience homelessness but for the assistance. Risk and predictive factors should be identified using local data, including the characteristics of the households entering shelter.
Key Partnerships	People with lived experience, Health clinics, schools, religious leaders, criminal justice partners

Ensure that the program is designed to provide the assistance or services that will be needed to prevent homelessness for people at high risk of homelessness or high risk of COVID

Indicated Group Strategies: Risk Factors

It is important to identify both risk and protective factors to be efficient with indicated group strategies. Use this information about common pathways to inform how you might create targeted strategies.

- Households who have eviction proceedings initiated;
- Families with young head of household;
- Households in doubled-up situations;
- Households who are losing their homes or have an eviction threat and recently lost employment in a sector impacted substantially by COVID-19 shutdowns;
- Individuals who exit institutions like detention, jails, prisons, or hospitals; or,
- Individuals who age out of foster care.

Indicated Group Strategies: Examples

Washington State Department of Commerce - Targeted Prevention Screening Tool assesses risk factors and rehousing barriers to prioritize populations at greatest risk of experiencing literal homelessness.

Omaha, NE - began using risk factors based on HPRP, SSVF and community-based research to intentionally target private investments during COVID response

Types of Prevention: Secondary Prevention Strategies

Goal	Commonly referred to as Diversion, provides a safe alternative for people who are seeking shelter or are moving to an unsheltered location. Prevents prolonged experiences of homelessness and avoids unnecessary shelter stays, preserving shelter and homeless housing resources for households with no other options.
Target Population	Households at the “front door” of the homeless response system at the point(s) they are seeking shelter or facing unsheltered homelessness.
Key Partnerships	People with lived experience, Coordinated Entry teams, Emergency Shelter Providers, Non-profits primarily led by people of color and primarily serving populations facing the greatest disparities

Strategic placement of the interventions and adoption of problem-solving techniques are critical to success in these strategies.

Secondary Prevention Strategies: Examples

Missoula, MT - Centralized diversion fund for people at the front doors of their system (including emergency shelter, drop in, outreach).

Washington, DC - Shelter diversion approach embedded in central intake for families at Virginia Williams Family Resource Center. Primary objective at intake is identifying safe alternatives to emergency shelter.

Homelessness Prevention Services

While the objectives and targeting differ between the types of prevention, the array of services needed may be very similar and may include:

- Short- or Medium-Term Rental Assistance
- Rental Arrears
- Housing Identification and Relocation
- Move-In Assistance
- Utility Assistance
- Mediation or Legal Services
- Credit Repair

Community Spotlight: Using Prevention to Promote Equity

Montgomery County, PA

About Montgomery County PA

Suburban CoC outside of Philadelphia

Prior to 2014:

- System not very Housing First-focused
- 40% of shelter entries from non-homeless locations

Overhauled homeless response system in 2014, which led to:

- 47% reduction in PIT Count, 5 years later
- RRH about 150 households per year
- Embrace of racial equity in decision-making



Homelessness Prevention Pilots



Eviction Prevention and Intervention Coalition (EPIC)

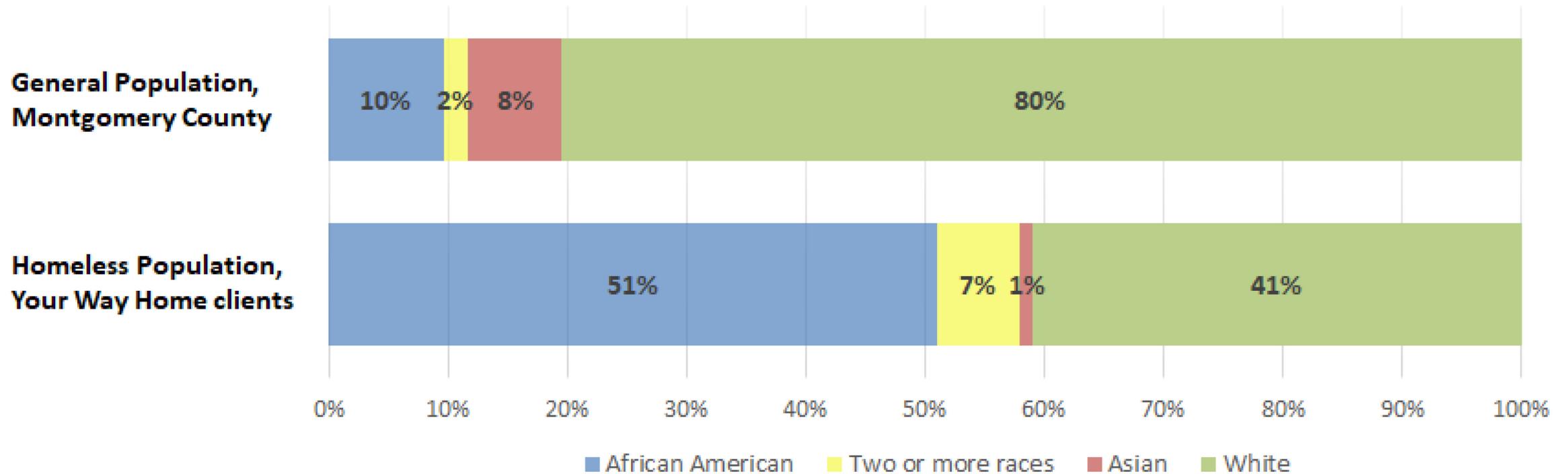
Recommendations from Barbara Poppe's [Unlocking Doors](#) report:

- Court-based eviction prevention
- Universal screening with targeted prevention
- School-based prevention



The Sprout Initiative (School-Based Prevention)

Race as a primary determinant of homelessness



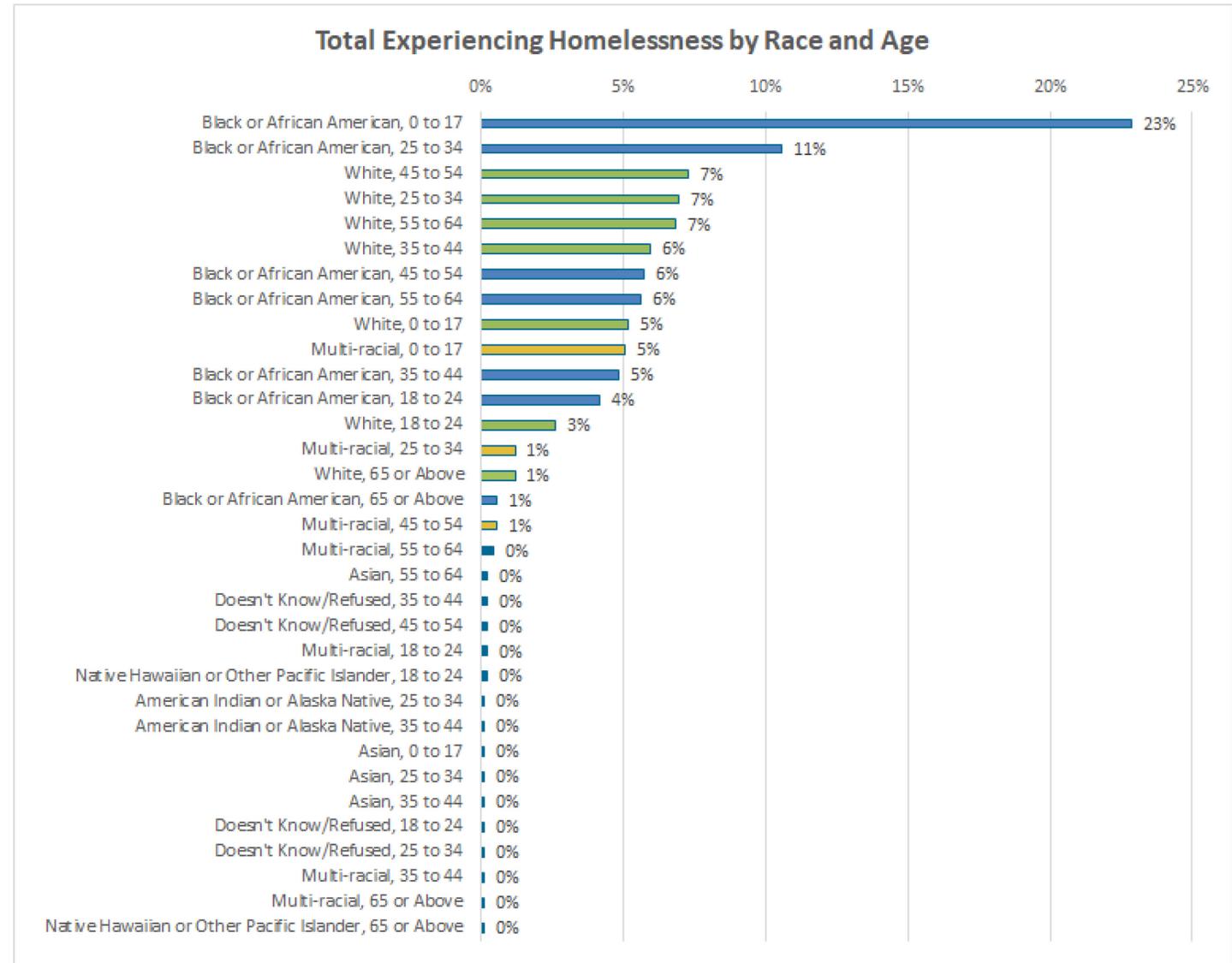
Intersection of demographics and other factors

Race: County population is 10% Black and 80% white, but its homeless population is 50% Black. *And nearly a quarter of all people experiencing homelessness in the county are Black children.*

Ethnicity: Latino/Latina/Latinx population experiences high rates of housing instability, overcrowding, and impact of COVID in Montco, but was not accessing coordinated entry.

Geography: 60% of all evictions in the County occurred in only two zip codes, which overlapped with the neighborhoods with highest percentages of BIPOC residents.

Household type: Similar to eviction rates, school districts with higher percentages of BIPOC residents have higher rates of student mobility (often related to housing instability).



Impact of prevention on homeless system

Promising trends in homeless data after implementation of prevention programs (*although not yet clear whether directly linked):

- Reduction in number of households needing/seeking homeless interventions
- 85% of those receiving prevention interventions did not present at Coordinated Entry again within 30 days
- Length of time homeless began to decrease - correlated with improved system capacity?

Prevention lessons learned/recommendations

Use **local data & voices of people with lived experience** to target prevention resources (geographically, demographically)

Formalize **partnerships with other systems** through cross-sector Advisory Teams & written procedures

Utilize an **iterative process**: start small, monitor progress, and adjust as needed

If possible, **investment in research & evaluation** can help quantify impact for future efforts

Federal Websites and Resources

HUD: <https://disaster-response-rehousing.info/>

A Framework for Homelessness Prevention: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/COVID-19-Homeless-System-Response-System-Planning-A-Framework-for-Homelessness-Prevention.pdf>

Prevention to Promote Equity: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/COVID-19-Homeless-System-Response-Prevention-to-Promote-Equity.pdf>

Homeless Prevention: Effective and Efficient Prevention Programs:
<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/COVID-19-Homeless-System-Response-Homelessness-Prevention-Effective-and-Efficient-Prevention-Programs.pdf>

How to Design, Scale, and Fund a Homelessness Prevention Program:
<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/COVID-19-Homeless-System-Response-How-to-Design-Scale-and-Fund-a-Homelessness-Prevention-Program.pdf>



Federal Websites and Resources, continued

HUD: <https://disaster-response-rehousing.info/>

Center for Evidence Based Solutions to Homelessness:

<http://www.evidenceonhomelessness.com/topic/homelessness-prevention/>

HUD Study on Market Based Predictors:

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/Market-Predictors-of-Homelessness.html>

Community Websites and Resources

EPIC (Montgomery County, PA):

<https://www.montgomerybar.org/for-the-public/eviction-prevention-intervention-coalition.php>

The Sprout Initiative (Montgomery County, PA):

<https://yourwayhome.org/sprout-initiative>

Q & A

