



2024 Advocacy Activities Guide

SHPA Advocacy

Section 1- State Budget & Policy
Priorities and Supporting Information.

Section 2 - Legislative Outreach Phone &
Emails Scripts

Section 3 - Additional Resources

Advocacy Day
April 16 & 17





SHPA members,

On any given night in Illinois, an estimated 10,431 people are living in shelters and transitional housing programs, in parks and abandoned buildings, in cars and in barns tens of thousands of Illinois families live temporarily and unstably with family and friends.

In September of 2021 Governor Pritzker signed an executive order that created two new commissions within Illinois State Government and a new position to lead the work: the Illinois Interagency Task Force on Homelessness, the Community Advisory Council, and a State Homelessness Chief. This was in large part a result of advocacy efforts led by SHPA members.

Last year SHPA and its partner organizations advocated passionately and effectively in support of HB2831 which passed with bipartisan support in both houses and was signed into law in July making the task force, advisory council, and a State Homelessness Chief permanent.

Last year when the budget was finalized, the supportive housing services line item under the HOME ILLINOIS budget saw \$6.5 million allocated for the next fiscal year. The budget included an \$85 million increase for HOME ILLINOIS, bringing state funding to over \$350 million, to support homelessness prevention, affordable housing, outreach, and other programs.

None of these successes could have been achieved without the commitment and due diligence of YOU, the SHPA membership and our coalition partners.

On February 21 of this year, SHPA along with the rest of Illinois listened optimistically when Governor Pritzker delivered his FY25 budget address. In his address the Governor highlighted the work being done with the launch of HOME Illinois recognizing SHPA member Housing Forward's client Jasmine.

In an initial review of the budget detail SHPA is disappointed that the current supportive housing services line items are proposed at flat funding from FY24. However, the proposed budget does call for a \$50 million increase for Home Illinois yet again, does not include any additional increases for supportive housing services, which will require us to advocate even harder for our budget request.

In 2023, SHPA members had a critical impact on several important legislative and policy issues. You can continue to raise your voice for SHPA in 2024 using the policy and budget sheets, supporting resources, and advocacy scripts found within this packet.

SHPA's 2024 advocacy priorities are grounded in precision data and rooted in diversity, equity, and inclusion, and guide the work of SHPA to advocate for policies that promote and advance supportive housing throughout the year.

Thank you for being a SHPA member and strong SHPA Advocate.

David Esposito

David Esposito
Executive Director

Section 1

State Budget & Policy
Priorities & Supporting
Information





GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

The Strength of People



The Power of Community

SHPA



2024 State Budget & Policy Priorities

Jeff Metzger
Director of
Government Affairs

j.metzger@shpa-il.org

6 Lawrence Square
Springfield, IL 62704

Phone: (217) 321-2476

\$ 11 Million General Revenue Fund Increase for Supportive Housing Services.

\$ 2.5 Million cost of living increase for all current DHS and DMH supportive housing grantees.

\$ 1 Million of supportive services for new supportive housing projects.

\$ 7.5 Million for Supportive Services Funding for State of Illinois Continuum of Care Programs.

Increase the Allowable Direct Administrative Cost Threshold

Currently IDHS Administrative costs shall not exceed 15% of the total grant award. SHPA is advocating for an increase from 15% to 20%.

Prompt Payment Act (PPA)

The state should be required by statute to issue contract payments within a reasonable time frame from submission of financial reporting, i.e., within 45 days.

Timely Contract Execution

The state should be required in statute to issue contracts within a reasonable period, i.e., within 30 days of the start of the fiscal year or an appropriation bill being signed.



**SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION**

Working Together, We Can Accomplish Anything



Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

Martin Luther King Jr.

To ensure that everyone has an affordable place to live will require maintaining and increasing state investments to support Supportive Housing Services

\$11 MILLION GENERAL REVENUE FUND INCREASE FOR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SERVICES.*

- **\$ 1million** for supportive services funding for new supportive housing projects.
- **\$ 2.5million** Cost-of-Living Adjustment for all current supportive housing grantees.
- **\$ 7.5million** for supportive services funding for state of Illinois Continuum of Care programs.

State Agency	Fund	Appropriation Name	FY24 Approp	FY25 Request	Increase
Department of Human Services	22	Mental Health Grants	\$22,713,800	\$24,258,059	\$1,544,259
Department of Human Services	80	Family & Community Services	\$16,490,100	\$25,945,841	\$9,455,741
Department of Human Services	80	Family & Community Services	\$3,382,500	\$3,382,500	flat
Total			\$42,586,400	\$53,586,400	\$11,000,000

* This increase is included as part of the \$42.2 million increase to IDHS for homeless services as requested by the Homeless Services Coalition.

For more information contact:
 Jeff Metzger, Director of Government Affairs
j.metzger@shpa-il.org
 6 Lawrence Square Springfield, IL 62704
 217-321-2476



SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION

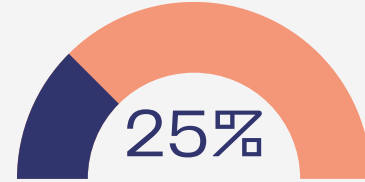
Working Together, We Can Accomplish Anything



SUPPORTIVE SERVICE FUNDING INITIATIVE CONTINUUM OF CARE PROGRAMS

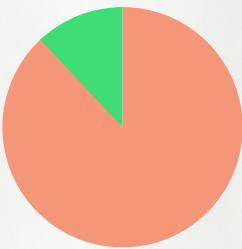
Number of Projects

In 2022, there were 315 HUD-funded CoC housing projects in the State of Illinois. These projects account for about 21,000 units of housing. SHPA gathered data from 285 of these projects. Data was extrapolated for the remaining 30 projects.



In total, these grants amount to \$130,454,558. Almost 25% of the total is spent on Supportive Services.

Other
12%



Salary and Fringe Benefits
88%

Overall, agencies spend 88% of their Supportive Service budgets on salary and fringe.

Amount of Funding

\$28,151,342

Overall, HUD CoC grants pay for \$28,151,342 of salary and fringe benefits annually.

While many of these grants were awarded more than 10 years ago, supportive service budgets remain flat funded.

This has created a huge problem for agencies as they are not able to pay competitive wages.

Questions?

Please contact David Esposito,
Executive Director of SHPA at
d.esposito@shpa-il.org



According to a recent study by the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), \$4.8 BILLION is needed (federally) to close the salary gap for the whole homeless services workforce. This effort will require substantial and sustained commitments from all levels of government and philanthropy. However, it is essential to the work of preventing and ending homelessness.

<https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/WorkforceSalaryNeeds-9-5-2023.pdf>

WHAT PROVIDERS ARE SAYING:

- Our agency has had to switch to a waitlist model because we do not have enough staff to handle the influx of homeless individuals.
- We are a small agency and we are struggling to find qualified staff at the pay range we can afford.
- We never receive COLA increases. Low salaries are the biggest barriers to finding qualified candidates because it is really hard to retain staff.
- We have around 40% staff turnover per year. We have done some wage increases but it is not nearly enough to be competitive. It is hard to find qualified applicants.
- We currently have 40-45 positions open. We cannot fund enough supportive services that our clients need. Our homeless programs were \$1.6 million in deficit last year.
- We have had to cut positions to keep paying our staff salary increases.
- We are seeing a greater need for the unhoused who can't maintain housing. We currently have a high vacancy ratio in our units.
- It is overwhelming for our agency to keep the previous level of services while being short-staffed.

ASK

We request the State of Illinois appropriate \$7,500,000 of General Revenue Funds to the Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Homeless Services to support a livable wage increase to these programs that are critical to ending homelessness in Illinois.





SUPPORTIVE SERVICE FUNDING INITIATIVE

CONTINUUM OF CARE PROGRAMS

Agency Testimonials

Michael Herman, CEO, Chicago House

"The number one thing that this [funding] would do is to provide stability within our programs. We cannot often raise salaries, so staff are continually looking around [for other opportunities]. We encourage our staff to want to move up, but we have no initial stability. The second thing is that in order for our agency to be competitive, our overall fiscal condition is at risk. We raised salaries by 5% for the past two years, which meant we were increasing our salaries more than our grants were increasing. 3% is the best that we could do this year, which is still lower than the inflation rate and we are starting to fall behind. This is a tight budget year because we do not necessarily have the funds needed to pay for the raises."

Amy Voils, Executive Director, MERCY Communities, Inc.

"Although we received an increase in FY 2024 state funding (including supportive services) through the COLA increase in our SHP contract and additional ETH funds, which allowed us to provide our staff with a COLA salary increase and partially covers our new agency retirement match, an emphasis should be placed upon providing our employees with a competitive wage, commensurate with their experience and education. A large majority of our staff, especially our front-line case managers, are one fiscally tragic event or one paycheck away from being in a similar homeless situation as many of our clients. We are in the business of solving the crisis of homeless, not adding to it, and unfortunately, the current salary rates for our supportive case managers do not support that concept. A significant, sustainable increase would allow us a greater opportunity to retain staff and be closer to the competitive wages of the for-profit and corporate world."

Doug Kenshol, Executive Director, South Suburban PADS

"South Suburban PADS works to prevent and end homelessness in Chicago's Southland region. As highlighted in the Brookings Institution's Suburbanization of Poverty research, the Southland experiences some of the highest rates of poverty and homelessness in the Chicago region but receives relatively little government and philanthropic support. As a result of limited philanthropic resources, South Suburban PADS and many other homeless service agencies in the area struggle to maintain competitive wages and retain excellent case management staff. The proposed Supportive Service Supplemental Funding Initiative will enable us to increase wages and staffing to better serve our supportive housing residents and help them to ultimately achieve better health and economic security."

Cathy Feltner, Executive Director, Embarras River Basin Agency, Inc.

"All providers of HUD homeless services are stressed beyond measure. The increased need for services and the lack of funding to pay competitive wages for case managers to provide the services is growing more apparent each day. HUD has basically flat-funded supportive services for many years, but cost of living and inflation have not remained flat. We have tried to maintain a wage consistent with increased costs of living, but in order to do that we have had to not refill some positions as they are vacated. That puts more strain on those who remain. Additional caseload, additional geography to be covered, and additional basic needs by participants in the programs require additional funding. Supplemental funding would provide a significant boost to our capacity to serve more, and serve better, from better one-on-one case management to document retrieval to employee morale and mental health; all will be impacted. There is no better time than the present for the much needed supplemental funding."

Jackie Edens, CEO, The Inner Voice

"At a time when we are seeing a mass exodus of social service workers, staff are getting burned out. The goodwill and passion of our staff can only go so far, they have bills to pay and families to feed. This supplemental funding would allow us to move towards pay parity among staff funded from various sources. It would also allow us to expand our programs by attracting and hiring bi-lingual staff to serve those most vulnerable in our communities. By being forward-thinking and committed to paying social service staff a living wage, Illinois would be seen as a leader among states and would be an example to other funding sources."

Background of Issue

While program costs and participant needs continue to rise, HUD-funded CoC agencies are struggling to provide adequate supportive services to program participants. Many agencies are unable to pay a livable and professional wage for skilled staff members who help provide much needed services to stabilize households in crisis.

Many of these grants were awarded 20-30 years ago, but supportive service budgets remain flat funded.

Statistical Data

In the State of Illinois in 2022, there were:

- 133 HUD-funded agencies
- 315 HUD-funded projects
- Approximately 21,000 housing units
- \$130,454,558 – Total Annual HUD CoC Award
- \$28,151,342 – Approximate amount of Supportive Service budgets in HUD grants

While HUD does provide some funding for supportive services and administration, a majority of the funds support the actual housing costs.

Research evidence identifies that qualified and professional support services result in much-needed housing stability, improved quality of life, positive increases in health outcomes, and the reduction of healthcare costs.

ASK

We request the State of Illinois appropriate \$7,500,000 of General Revenue Funds to the Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Homeless Services to support a livable and professional wage increase to these programs that are critical to ending homelessness in Illinois.



**SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION**

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To Continue Making Progress on the HOME Illinois Plan, \$42.2 Million Beyond Proposed FY25 State Budget Needed

Governor Pritzker's FY25 budget proposal, includes a **\$50 million increase for the HOME Illinois line item**, including:

- \$35 million to extend the court-based rent assistance program (currently paid for with federal ARPA Emergency Rent Assistance funds)
- \$2 million to maintain legal services to prevent evictions (currently paid for with another GRF line item proposed to be eliminated)
- \$13 million for a new initiative to reduce racial disparities regarding who experiences homelessness among people who are Black.

Within the proposed \$250.3 million HOME Illinois line item, IDHS' Homelessness Prevention and Homeless Youth Programs were provided modest funding increases by shifting other HOME Illinois money around from previously proposed new initiatives.

These are all crucial priorities that need these proposed funding levels. However, we ask that the proposed funding level for HOME Illinois be increased by \$42.2 million, for a total of \$92.2 million in new funding, for next fiscal year.

To make sure that the State of Illinois continues to make progress on *HOME Illinois*—Governor Pritzker's plan to reach functional zero homelessness—the **General Assembly should support the proposed FY25 HOME Illinois funding levels and add on to them for the following priorities:**

\$20.1 million increase for the Emergency and Transitional Housing Program to continue to improve staffing and operations of existing programs and to continue making progress towards eliminating the severe shortage of emergency shelter beds statewide. According to the Illinois Interagency Task Force on Homelessness, in December 2022 there was a shortage of 4,551 emergency shelter beds statewide. (The proposed FY25 budget provides no increase.)

\$11 million for Supportive Housing Services to maintain and enhance supportive service staff and services, including new supportive housing developed in 2024. According to the Illinois Interagency Task Force on Homelessness, there is a need to create 6,092 units of permanent supportive housing units and/or other permanent affordable housing in order to reach the goal of functional zero homelessness statewide. (The proposed FY25 budget provides no increase.)

\$4.6 million additional increase for the Homeless Prevention Program to provide additional grants to people in need. We estimate that the total increase requested will assist 4,000 to 5,000 households to stay housed, more than half of them families with children. (The proposed FY25 budget provides a \$5.4 million increase through reallocation of existing HOME Illinois funding.)

\$6.5 million additional increase for the Homeless Youth Program to ensure that youth seeking services have access to case management, more scattered site supportive housing for youth and psychiatric services. Further, as there are areas of the state that are not currently providing youth specific services, increasing funding will allow new providers, as well as providers who serve adults, to expand their expertise and services to meet the needs of youth. (The proposed FY25 budget provides a \$1.5 million increase through reallocation of existing HOME Illinois funding.)

For more information contact:

NIYA KELLY | Chicago Coalition for the Homeless | niya@chicagohomeless.org | 312-641-4140

BOB PALMER | Housing Action Illinois | bob@housingactionil.org | 312-282-3959

DOUG KENSHOL | Illinois Shelter Alliance | dkenshol@sspads.org | 708-704-0143

JEFF METZGER | Supportive Housing Providers Association | j.metzger@shpa-il.org | 217-321-2476



Illinois Shelter Alliance





GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

The Strength of People



The Power of Community

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

Martin Luther King jr.

DID YOU KNOW?

SHPA as a member of the Health & Human Services Coalition supports the Coalition's Community Partner Fair Contracting Act for which the policy changes below are included.

SHPA often works in conjunction with partner organizations supporting uniform legislation and advocating on specific policy changes.



COMMUNITY PARTNER FAIR CONTRACTING ACT POLICY CHANGES

Timely Contract Execution

The State should be required in statute to issue contracts within a reasonable period of time, i.e., within **30 days** of the start of the fiscal year or appropriation bill being signed..

Increase Allowable Administrative Support

Currently, IDHS financial policy limits the administrative cost reimbursement for supportive housing programs to 15% of the total grant award. SHPA is requesting the cap be increased from 15% to 20%.

Prompt Payment Act (PPA)

The state should be required by statute to issue contract payments within a reasonable timeframe from submission of financial reporting, i.e., within **45 days**.

For more information contact:

Jeff Metzger, Director of Government Affairs

j.metzger@shpa-il.org



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Working Together, We Can Accomplish Anything



We are The Health and Human Services Coalition of Illinois.

Support the Community Partner Fair Contracting Act SB3457/HB5064

The Community Partner Fair Contracting Act (CPFCA) will rectify structural inequities in the state’s contracting, payment, and court of claims systems to ensure that health and human service providers can better meet the needs of their communities.

The Community Partner Fair Contracting Act will:



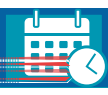
Ensure Timely Contracts and Payments: Amends the Prompt Payment Act (PPA) to require agencies to issue contracts within 30 days of the start of the grant term, and approve bills or invoices within 30 days. It also shortens the time frame between when bill is approved and when interest begins accruing from 90 to 45 days.



Expand and Clarify Advanced Payment Eligibility: Amends the PPA to expand list of critical services in statute and requires state contracts to identify a date of payment and whether a contract is eligible for PPA and advanced payment.



Promote Flexible Contracts that cover the full cost of services: Amends the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) to remove arbitrary caps on fringe benefits and prevents state agencies from limiting indirect costs in contracts or grant agreements to less than 20%.



Expedite and Simplify Court of Claims Process: Amends the Court of Claims Act (CCA) to divert undisputed lapsed appropriation claims of less than \$2500 and allow state agencies to pay claims from any appropriated funding source.

Community based Health and Human Service providers face undue administrative burden when contracting with the State of Illinois, which results in an inequitable distribution of state resources. **Passage of the CPFCA will:**

- Reduce confusion and create administrative efficiencies for state agencies, contractors and grantees;
- Alleviate undue administrative burden for community-based providers with State contracts;
- Help rectify issues with state contracting and payment systems most impacting organizations with the smallest budgets and serving Black, Indigenous, and Communities of Color (BIPOC) throughout the State.





To inform the CPFCA, the Health and Human Service Coalition of Illinois conducted a statewide survey in the spring of 2023 to assess ongoing challenges and pain points. See page 2 for key findings.

Sign on to support the Community Partner Fair Contracting Act today!

Questions? Holly Ambuehl, Director of Policy and Government Affairs, Forefront, hambuehl@myforefront.org
Contact: Lauren Wright, Executive Director of IL Partners for Human Service, lauren@illinoispartners.org

Statewide Contracting Survey Results

The Health and Human Services Coalition of Illinois conducted a statewide survey to assess government contracting challenges and inform an appropriate policy response that prioritizes:

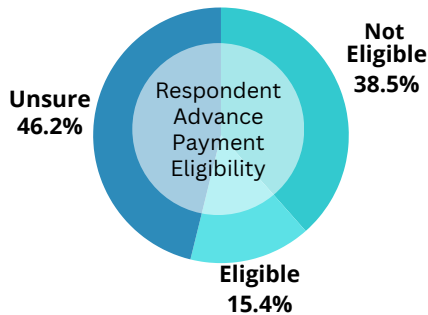
-  Timely Contracts and Payments
-  Advanced Payment Eligibility Expansion and Clarity
-  Flexible Contracts that cover the full cost of services
-  Expedited and Simplified Court of Claims Processes

Key Findings from the Survey:



Advance Payments

Fewer than half of surveyed contractors are eligible for advance payments. Those with the smallest budgets and those with BIPOC leadership are the least likely to receive them.



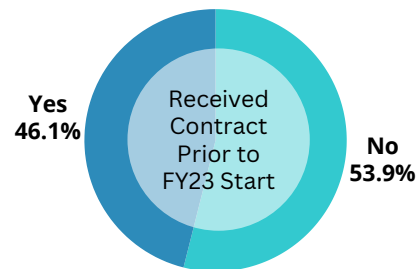
Prompt Payment Act

Almost half of all respondents were unclear how the Prompt Payment Act applies to their contracts. Services for rural populations, people living with disabilities, and led by BIPOC leaders were less likely to be eligible.



Contract Delays

The State issued late contracts more than 50% of the time, which disproportionately and negatively impacted services in Cook County, services in rural areas, and organizations with the smallest budgets.

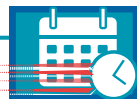


Timely Payments

At least 25% of state contracts are not paid on a timely ongoing basis. Organizations with the smallest budgets and those serving BIPOC communities are more likely to be paid late.

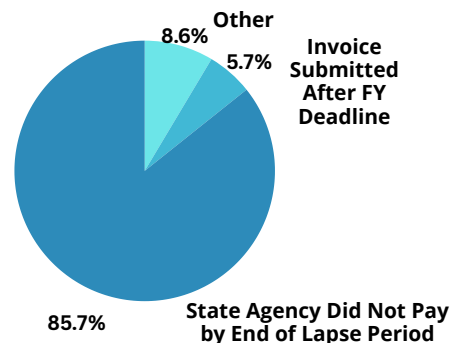
Accruing Receivables

At any given time, the State owes millions of dollars to HHS contractors; the average receivable is almost \$350,000 and over 6 months old and more than half of receivables reported are owed to BIPOC-led/serving organizations.



Court of Claims

Over 85% of the pending Court of Claims reported resulted from the State not paying invoice(s) before the end of the lapse period. Claims ranged from ~\$1,000 to ~\$600,000 and the oldest claim is almost seven years old.



Questions? Holly Ambuehl, Director of Policy and Government Affairs, Forefront, hambuehl@myforefront.org
Contact: Lauren Wright, Executive Director of IL Partners for Human Service, lauren@illinoispartners.org

Section 2

Legislative Outreach
Phone & Email Scripts





2024 State Budget Call & Email Script

SHPAdvocates,

We are calling all SHPA Members and supporters to CALL and EMAIL your Illinois State Representatives and Senators asking them to support and prioritize SHPA's 2024 Budget & Policy priorities. These include a request for an increase in budget appropriations of \$11 million to the Supportive Housing Services line item of the state budget and to support the Community Partnership Contracting Act. Everything that you need to communicate with your legislator is included within the body of this document.

This will work best as a two-step process.

1) contact them via phone:

Call both your Representative & Senators Springfield and district offices. The call scripts include blank spaces where you can insert your specific agency/program information and then also the name of the Representative/Senator you are contacting. The yellow highlighted spaces in the call script are where you will be recording information that you ascertain from the staff member and subsequently utilize for your email addendum.

2) Follow-up with an e-mail:

See e-mail template below.

For those of you attending SHPA's advocacy day, you can find a meeting request script at the end of this document. You may choose to combine these scripts into one call or make separate calls. Of course, it is our hope that all of you can attend advocacy day, however, if you are unable to attend, we strongly encourage every SHPA member to call and email members of the Illinois General Assembly.

Not everyone knows who their state Senator and Representatives are, therefore, a search link is at top of the phone script that provides you the opportunity to look up who they are based on the location information that you input. Once you look up your Senator and Representative you will find both their district office and Springfield contact information. If you can call both with the same message that would be ideal. Every office functions differently and sometimes they receive messages more efficiently from district staff and other times Springfield staff. So, you should be making 4 calls in total. 2 calls to your Senator (one district & one Springfield and then two calls to your Representative. Only one email will be necessary as a follow-up to your call.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks!

Jeff
Jeff Metzger
Director of Government
Affairs j.metzger@shpa-il.org



Locate Your Legislator

<https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/DistrictLocator/DistrictOfficialSearchByAddress.aspx>

Step 1

Phone Script:

When calling the office of a member of the House or Senate

Hello, my name is _____ and I live in the ____ district. Thank you for taking my call today. As a person working on behalf of supportive housing and issues related to it, I am a strong supporter of the Supportive Housing Providers Association (SHPA) and all the work that they do. I would respectfully ask the Representative/Senator to support SHPA's 2024 Budget request for \$11 million General Revenue fund increase for Supportive Housing Services. This \$11 million budget increase is included as part of the \$42.2 million increase to IDHS for homeless services as requested by the homeless services coalition. In addition, we are asking the Representative/Senator to support the Community Partnership Contracting Act.

I would like to email the Senator/Representative a fact sheet that breaks down more specifically the allocations of funding.

Would you be so kind as to give me the best email to send this information? _____
_____ and what was your name? _____.

Thank you again for your time and I certainly appreciate all that you do for the constituents of the district. I will send that email to you shortly. Thank you again.

If you or the (Representative/Senator) have any additional questions the contact information for SHPA is included on the fact sheet. SHPA's Government Affairs Director Jeff Metzger will also follow-up with your office as well. Thank you so much (their name) . I really appreciate your time and help.

#END SCRIPT



Step 2

Email Template:

(this should only be sent after the above phone call is made and message left)

Hello *Representative/Senator* _____ I trust that this email finds you well. I had the pleasure of speaking with _____ from your office today. I advised *him/her* that I would follow-up with an email to the call. My name is _____ and I live in the _____ district. Not only am I a constituent of the district, but I also work every day to ensure that the citizens of Illinois in need have supportive housing. As a person working on behalf of supportive housing and issues related to it, I am a strong supporter of the Supportive Housing Providers Association (SHPA)

and all the work that they do. I would respectfully ask you to support and prioritize SHPA's 2024 Budget request of \$11 million increase to the general revenue fund for supportive housing services. This \$11 million budget increase is included as part of the \$42.2 million increase to IDHS for homeless services as requested by the homeless services coalition.

This increase of \$11 million includes:

- \$2.5 million cost - of - living adjustment for all current Supportive Housing grantees.
- \$1 million for supportive services funding for new supportive housing projects.
- \$7.5 million for supportive services funding for state of Illinois Continuum of Care programs.

In addition, we respectfully request that they also support SHPA's 2024 Policy Priorities that are included in the Community Partnership Contract Act HB5064/SB3457.

If you are in support of either of these requests by SHPA I would be grateful if you would be willing to respond to my email with that affirmation. Having said that, if you would like any additional information as you consider your support, please contact SHPA's Executive Director David Esposito d.esposito@shpa-il.org or Government Affairs Director Jeff Metzger j.metzger@shpa-il.org The phone number for SHPA is 217-321-2476.

Thank you again for doing all the work that you do and for representing your district.

Respectfully,



Meeting Request Script (for those attending Advocacy Day Only)

When you call your respective Senator or Representative, know that you will be speaking with the person in charge of his/her calendar and not the Representative or Senator themselves. Please refer to the following sample script below when calling, feel free to deviate away from the script as you wish or follow it word for word.

Meeting Script:

“Hello, may I speak with (Senator or Representative) (last name of official) scheduler? Thank you for taking my call.

My name is (your name) and I am a member of the Supportive Housing Providers Association of Illinois. (SHPA)

SHPA is hosting their annual Advocacy Day on April 17th. I am a constituent of the (Senator or Representatives) and would like to schedule a meeting while in Springfield on April 17th. I want briefly to share with (him/her) SHPA’s budget and policy priorities for supportive housing & homeless services. I understand that any time scheduled might be tentative based on their voting/committee schedules. However, I would like to set a meeting in advance as a courtesy. Can we set a time now for April 17th? I can leave my name, email, cell phone number to reach me at should it anything change. What was your name again? Thank you so much (their name) I really appreciate your time and help.”

PLEASE COPY MY EMAIL ADDRESS ON THE EMAILS THAT YOU SEND J.METZGER@SHPA-IL.ORG

Please send me an email with any takeaways or feedback from your calls. Good luck with your call, I am very confident in your abilities and know that you will be a strong SHPAdvocate.

Any questions, contact me at: J.Metzger@shpa-il.org

Thank you,

Jeff Metzger, Director of Government Affairs

Section 3

Additional Resources



New Estimates Suggest that \$4.8 Billion is Needed to Bring Homeless Services Salaries into the Modern Era



Written By: Nicole DuBois, Senior Research Analyst, and Ann Oliva, CEO
Published: September 5, 2023

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (the Alliance) estimates that the homeless workforce sector faces a deficit of at least \$4.8 billion to adequately pay current workers. This total represents an aggregated sum of individual employee salaries. The Alliance estimates that the average permanent housing employee is paid \$42,912 and the average emergency shelter employee is paid \$27,830. They would require salary increases of 15 and 77 percent respectively to afford the average cost of a one-bedroom apartment. The federal government, as a major funder of the sector, could step in to address this gap by increasing the staffing component of Homeless Assistance Grants (HAG) commensurately. Ensuring sufficient pay will require substantial and sustained commitments from all levels of government and philanthropy. Addressing this pay gap, even if it isn't easy, is essential to the work of preventing and ending homelessness.

Pay gaps indicate homeless service workers struggle to pay for housing themselves.

On average across the country, the Alliance estimates that emergency shelter staff are paid \$27,830 and permanent housing staff are paid \$42,912.¹ The differences are likely due to staffing requirements (for example, permanent housing providers are more likely to require a master's degree or licensure, and more likely to employ full-time workers) but could also be due to funding sources or other variations. These estimates align with recent local analyses of sector wages in [Los Angeles](#), [San Francisco](#), and [Multnomah County, OR](#).² With these wages, homeless service sector workers, particularly frontline staff, [may struggle to afford their own housing](#).

At best, the Alliance calculates that permanent housing employees require a 15 percent raise and emergency shelter employees require a 77 percent raise to afford the average cost of a one-bedroom apartment.³ The real gap could be much larger. Applying a one salary per bedroom standard is not a fair proxy for all households: caregivers and single parents might sustain larger households on one income. Permanent housing employees require a 39 percent raise to afford a two-bedroom apartment, and emergency shelter employees would need their salaries to more than double.

THE ALLIANCE PROPOSES THAT **ALL STAFF** SHOULD EARN, **AT LEAST**, THE SALARY NEEDED TO AFFORD 1-BR HOUSING:

\$49,255

IN REALITY, **PERMANENT HOUSING STAFF** ONLY EARN

\$42,912

and need a **15% increase** in salary to afford housing.

ADDITIONALLY, **EMERGENCY SHELTER STAFF** ONLY EARN

\$27,830

and need a **77% increase** in salary to afford housing.

Importantly, these are broad national estimates that mask variation by region and by role. People in high-cost cities and at organizations with large pay disparities between program management and frontline staff are likely to face even higher individual salary gaps. And, putting a number to this salary gap is merely a starting point to shore up the homeless services workforce.

Federal funding is a significant revenue source for homeless service sector salaries — and can address the significant salary gap.

The Alliance estimates that HAG funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) needs to increase by a minimum of \$241 million over the prior year to address the pay gap. This would include a \$97 million increase in the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program, which largely covers permanent housing employees, and a \$144 million increase in the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program, which largely covers emergency shelter employees. These increases would cover the individual pay gap to afford a one-bedroom apartment, as identified above, for employees funded through these grants.⁴ This estimated amount represents a 3.5 and 50 percent increase, respectively, in each funding stream over its FY2022 level.

A \$241 million increase in HAG funding would be an important first step to redress the harms of decades of neglect within this sector. It should be built upon in future spending bills and include required annual cost of living adjustments. HUD programs

already incorporate similar automatic adjustments to rental assistance payments. Why should staff salaries be different?

The Senate Transportation Housing and Urban Development bill included an increase of [\\$25 million for staffing](#). This is not enough, nor is it guaranteed to be included in the final budget agreed upon by both houses of Congress. While significant, it is worth noting that these homeless assistance grant increases represent only the tip of the iceberg. Thousands more people work in this sector besides staff currently paid through HUD grants, their salaries funded by philanthropic donations and other federal, state, and local dollars.

The Alliance estimates that ensuring current sector employees can afford a 1-bedroom unit would require filling a gap of \$4.77 billion, at minimum. Notably, this amount does not encompass the holistic picture of investments required to support this workforce, including adequate training and benefits. Nor does it address the question of what staffing level is ideal for doing this work — which is likely at levels much beyond current capacity. Still, it is helpful to quantify these salary gaps as a starting point for future resource conversations.

\$4.8 BILLION

is needed to close the salary gap for the **whole homeless services workforce**. This requires long-term planning and solutions.

An initial investment of
\$241 MILLION

from Congress could help workers funded through Homeless Assistance Grants to afford modest 1-BR housing.

Raising staff salaries is essential to the work of ending homelessness.

People experiencing homelessness, and the systems that endeavor to support them, [suffer](#) when workers are not adequately paid. Staff interactions have meaningful impacts on [people's engagement with services](#) and what their path to housing ultimately looks like. Staff turnover — [closely linked to inadequate pay and burnout due to capacity constraints](#) — can negatively impact people's interactions with providers. And, people with lived experience of homelessness make up an estimated one-quarter of the sector's [workforce](#). A sufficient salary will support their continued housing stability — while providing fair compensation for the value they bring through their interactions with consumers and their impact on service design.

[Inadequate pay is a racial equity issue](#), too. People in the highest paying senior management roles are disproportionately White. Meanwhile, Black and other employees of color can be denied opportunities to progress into the few higher-paying roles at these organizations. Increasing salaries of current employees will better equip provider organizations to hire and retain diverse talent, which is beneficial to the people being served, the workplace, and the broader community.

On a system level, insufficient staffing can challenge communities' ability to [administer programs](#) and spend down federal homelessness assistance resources. Cities and states across the country need an adequate workforce to scale up housing and services to meet the needs of their communities, and to ultimately end homelessness.

- ¹ The Alliance applied a 2% cost of living adjustments to the wage estimates from: Culhane, Dennis & Seongho An. "Estimated Revenue of the Nonprofit Homeless Shelter 'Industry' in the United States: Implications for a More Comprehensive Approach to Unmet Shelter Demand." Housing Policy Debate, 2011. Data limitations include: 1) It does not distinguish between part- and full-time workers, which could artificially depress salary estimates particularly for shelter workers. 2) The original analysis was performed using tax data reported by nonprofits and does not include, for example, government employees, who might have different pay rates and staffing ratios. 3) The original analysis did not include Rapid Re-Housing providers, but we included RRH housing units to extrapolate the total 'permanent housing' workforce. 4) A 2% cost of living adjustment may over- or understate current wage rates.
- ² For example, these studies found the local pay to be between \$42,000-\$57,000 for frontline staff in Los Angeles and \$46,000 for all roles in Multnomah County. Salaries in high-cost metros are expected to be higher than our estimated national average.
- ³ Households need to earn \$49,255 to afford a 1-bedroom apartment or \$59,446 to afford a 2-bedroom apartment. Aurand et al. "Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing." National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2023.
- ⁴ Government funding is a portion of the revenue nonprofits use to pay staff salaries, but this estimate assumes the federal government would cover 100% of the required increase. The Alliance chose this standard because 1) the federal government cannot count on other funders to additionally increase accordingly, and 2) any attempts to further drill down are likely to be error-prone and lead towards underestimates of the need.

Working in Homeless Services: A Survey of the Field



Written By: Joy Moses, Vice President of Research and Evidence
Published: December 5, 2023

Anecdotal stories about challenges facing the homeless services workforce are commonplace.

Those who know people in the field have surely heard about the stresses of serving people with great needs and trying to achieve goals within organizations with limited resources. These stories suggest a need to be concerned about workers, but also for the well-being of people experiencing homelessness and the nation's efforts to end homelessness.

Earlier this year, the National Alliance to End Homelessness set out to better understand and document workforce challenges. As a part of these efforts, the Alliance conducted a nationwide survey of homeless services employees, learning about:

1. **A Mission-Driven Workforce.** Much of the workforce cites altruistic reasons for choosing and liking their profession. In total, 87 percent valued doing worthwhile work.
2. **Staffing Challenges.** Among respondents, 74 percent said that their agencies/organizations were understaffed, while 71 percent reported that their agencies/organizations experienced high employee turnover.
3. **Overwhelming Work Environments.** Homeless services personnel experience significant stress rooted in not being able to help enough people (69 percent). They also feel overworked (46 percent).
4. **Personal Sacrifices.** The workforce is overwhelmingly impacted by low salaries, leading to financial difficulties: they worry about paying for wants like vacations (54 percent) but also needs such as housing (44 percent).
5. **Harms to Service Delivery.** Employees indicate that workforce challenges translate into cutbacks in services and clients not fully getting the help they need.

The homeless services workforce should be appreciated for their mission-driven dedication to their work. However, they also desperately need additional resources, and other policy and practice supports, to ensure its continued work can meet the needs of all people experiencing homelessness.

Methodology

The Alliance created an online survey in Google Forms. It was distributed to the homeless services workforce via the organization's newsletter, social media, and an announcement at its national conference in July 2023. Some recipients of the survey link also shared it with their networks. The survey was conducted between July 17, 2023 and September 15, 2023.

The responses were analyzed by Alliance staff. Most respondents completed the survey in full. No question had a response rate below 91 percent. Although the vast majority of respondents were salaried employees, some received stipends or were part-time or volunteer workers. The reported data on salaries solely pertains to salaried employees working at least 35 hours per week.

Who Responded?

In total, 5,044 people responded to the survey.

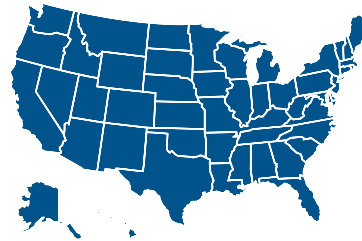
Location. Survey takers worked in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. Western and southern states were highly represented in the survey. However, these regions have the largest populations of people experiencing homelessness — thus, they may simply have more workers. Workers in northeast states may be slightly underrepresented, since those states are home to 16 percent of respondents but 21 percent of people experiencing homelessness.

Since the majority of the homeless population lives in urban areas, it was unsurprising that most (75 percent) of the respondents served these types of communities.

Survey Respondent Demographics. Survey participants were asked a series of demographic questions. Ideally, the Alliance would be able to compare its respondents to a comprehensive census of the homelessness workforce. However, such data does not exist — therefore, the Alliance cannot determine the extent to which these survey takers are representative of all the people doing this work.

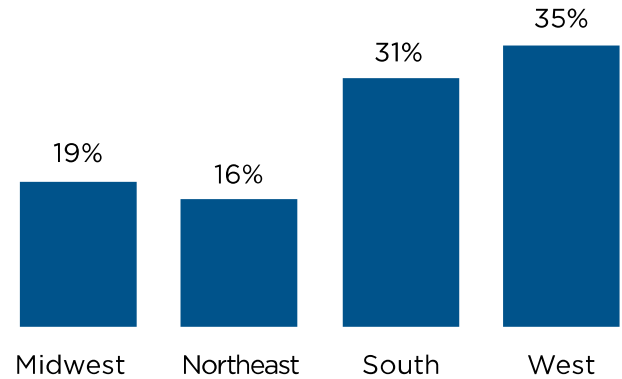
The respondents were overwhelmingly women (77 percent), matching anecdotal information from the field. The Alliance’s interactions with the field have suggested a workforce that is significantly female.

Where Respondents Work

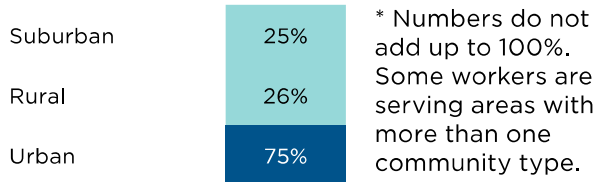


All 50 States and the District of Columbia.

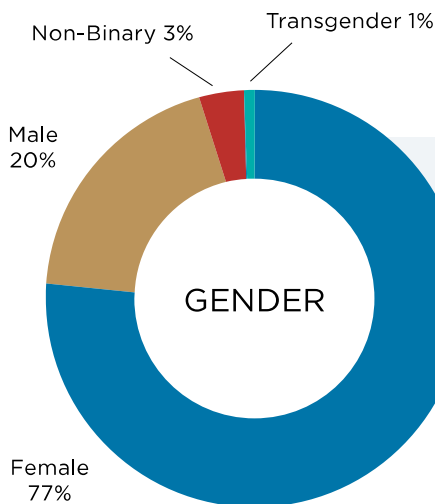
Region of the Country



Community Type

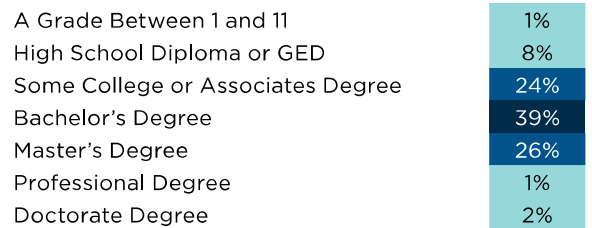


Survey Respondent Demographics

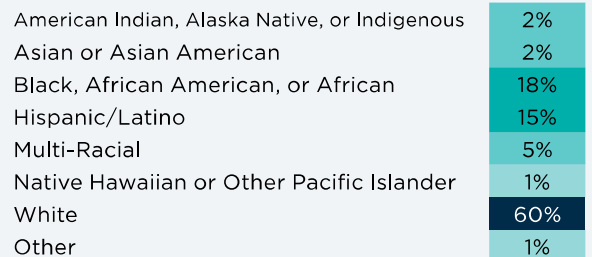


* Some respondents identified with more than one gender category (eg, “transgender” and “female”). Thus, the population shares add up to a little more than 100 percent.

Educational Attainment



Race/Ethnicity



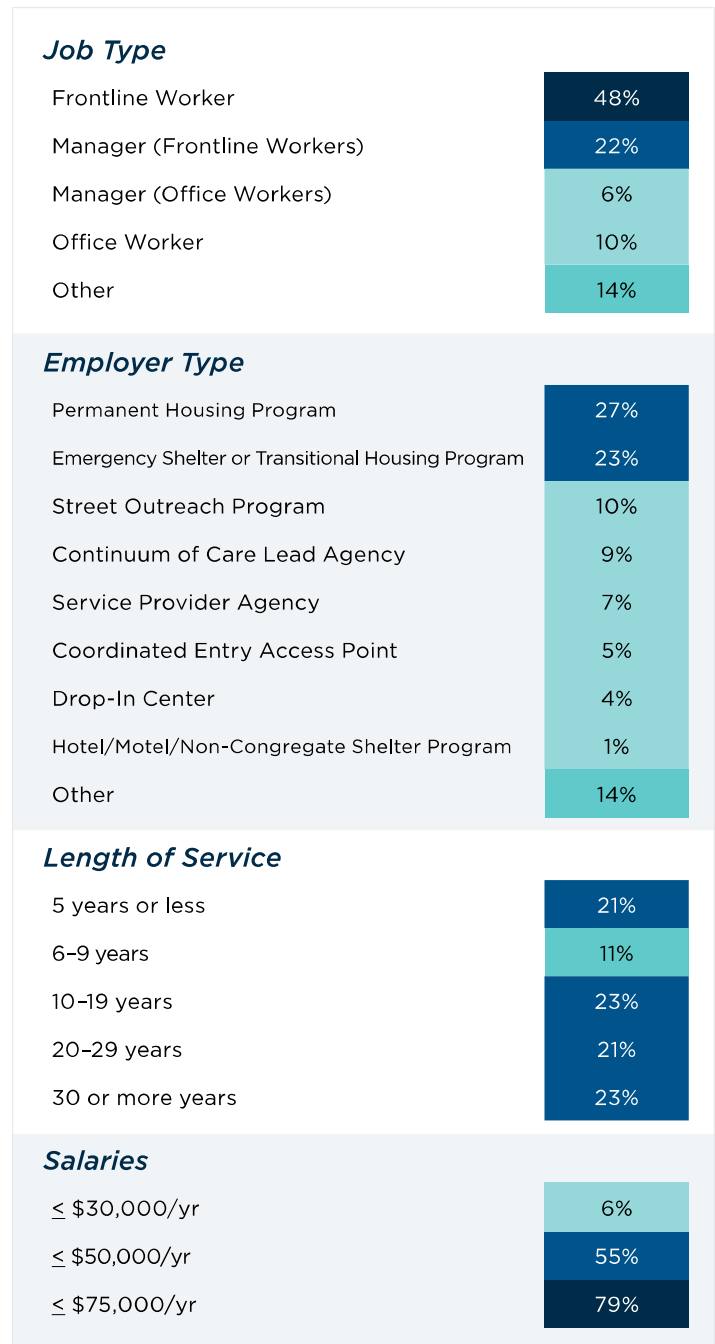
* This chart merges the responses related to race and ethnicity. Some Hispanics/Latinos also identified with a specific racial group such as “white”. Thus, the population shares add up to more than 100 percent.

Additionally, the respondents were racially and ethnically diverse. Group representation in the survey resembled overall [Census population data](#) for the United States. Notably, however, those in the Black, African American, or African group were overrepresented in the survey (18 percent of respondents) compared to their share of the general population (12 percent). It is possible that this group is simply overrepresented within the homelessness workforce — i.e., group members may be more likely than others to choose this type of work. Importantly, Black people are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness, representing 37 percent of the homeless population in 2022. This seismic impact of the issue on Black people may be drawing more group members to the profession. However, if the Alliance’s respondents are representative (i.e., Black people make up 18 percent of the workforce), there may be a disproportionality of fewer Black people working in homelessness — the expectation might be that group workforce numbers would also be around 37 percent.

Finally, the sample of survey respondents was overwhelmingly educated — 92 percent had at least some college training, while 68 percent had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Without the benefit of being able to compare these numbers to a full census of the workforce, the Alliance must acknowledge the possibility that the survey simply failed to significantly reach non-college-educated people. Such workers likely have the lowest pay and the most underheard voices.

Work-Related Characteristics. Fifty-five percent of full-time workers who responded to the survey earned less than \$55,000 per year, putting them at severe risk of being unable to afford their own housing. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, on average, a United States worker must earn \$49,234 to afford a one-bedroom apartment and \$59,446 for a two-bedroom unit. The Alliance previously estimated a [\\$4.8 billion deficit](#) between current homeless service sector salaries and what is needed to bring workers’ pay up to adequate amounts that would allow them to comfortably afford housing.

In addition to being at risk of not being able to afford housing, respondents were overwhelmingly frontline workers¹ or supervisors/managers of frontline workers (70 percent). Most worked within permanent housing (27 percent) or temporary housing programs (24 percent). But this group is employed in other capacities, such as by Continuum of Care (CoC) agencies, and have diverse levels of experience. Some were just starting their careers while others have been in the field for decades.



1 “Frontline worker” was defined as spending at least 25 percent of work time with clients who are currently or formerly homeless.

Why Do People Work in the Homelessness Field?

Altruism and a sense of calling play a significant role in drawing people into, and staying in, these professions. When given the opportunity to describe their reasons for working in the homelessness field, multiple people spoke about their religious faith. Some noted a desire to help: “No one else was stepping up to do the necessary work.” AmeriCorps and Peace Corps were mentioned as gateways into service. Respondents also valued opportunities to develop strong relationships. The survey specifically asked about relationships with clients and co-workers, but respondents also mentioned valued the opportunity to develop positive relationships with supervisors, board members, and collaborating organizations.

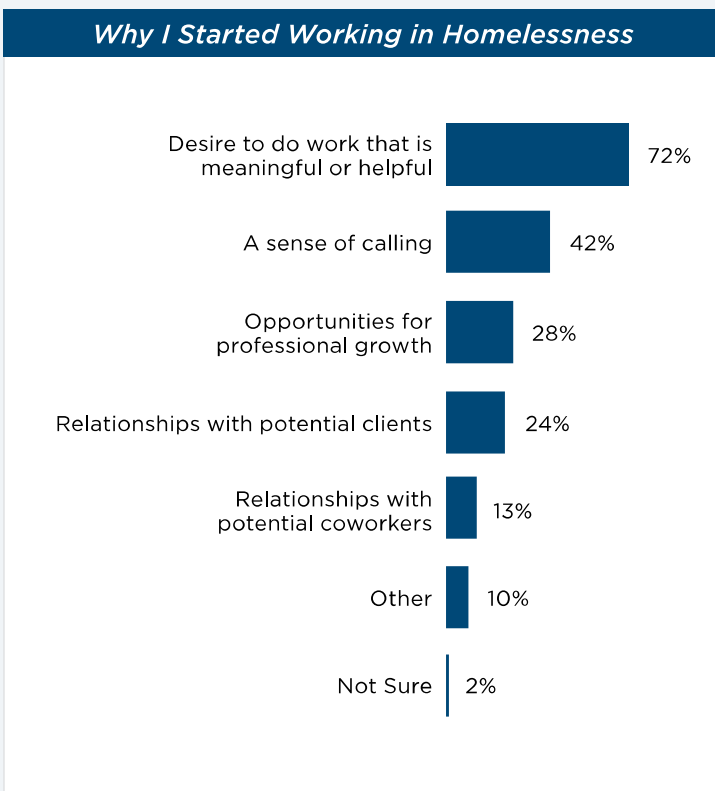
Although unprompted, at least 182 respondents volunteered that they (or a loved one) had lived experience of homelessness and/or related challenges with mental health and addiction. They felt drawn to helping others in similar circumstances. As one person said, “I got the

help I needed as a youth staying in shelter. There were a lot of challenges, but it was one of the few places I remember feeling like I could breathe. I want to create that sense of safety for others.”

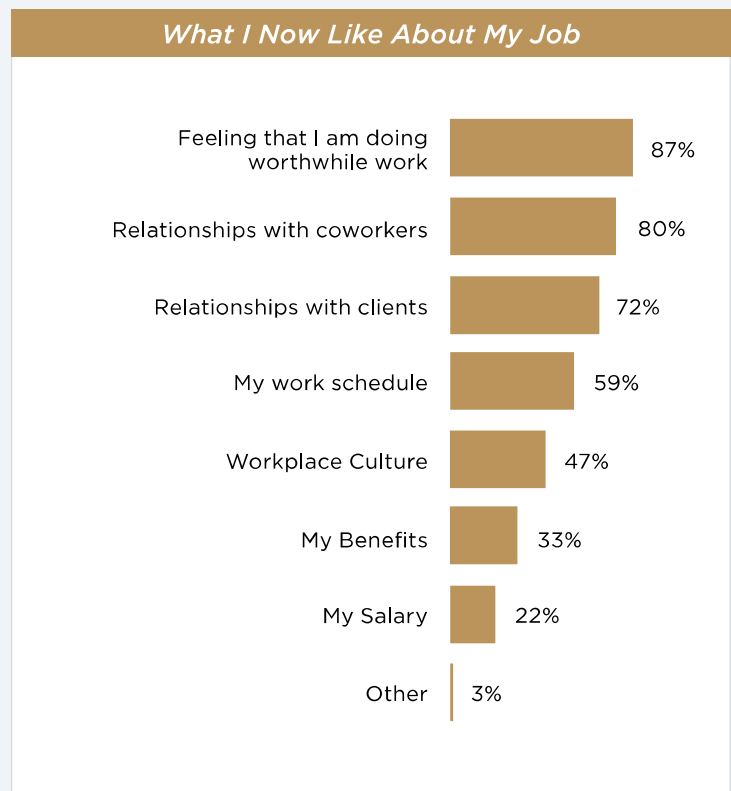
A segment of people connected to their profession via previous work or concern about specific subpopulations. These include veterans, human trafficking survivors, and children and youth.

Finally, several respondents shared some very practical reasons for engaging in this work: for example, being retired but still wanting or needing to work. Others left corporate America to try something new. A slice of survey takers expressed an appreciation for their salary, benefits, work-life balance, and work-from-home opportunities. Some were assigned to homelessness work by agencies that had broader missions. And then there were those who lost employment during the pandemic (or at some other time) and simply needed to pay their bills. Perhaps, some of those falling into this bucket share the sentiments of one survey taker: “Originally [I] began working in homeless services just to have a job but ended up falling in love with the job. I found my calling.”

Reasons for Working in the Homelessness Workforce



The answer options for these two questions were similar but not identical. Please see [the appendix](#) for the exact wording of the questions.



Difficult Work Environments: Insufficient Staffing and High Turnover

The good intentions and sense of purpose expressed by many homeless services professionals often coexist with challenging working conditions. Significant weight falls on their shoulders. Importantly, these circumstances also dramatically impact people experiencing homelessness and the nation's goal of reducing and ending homelessness.

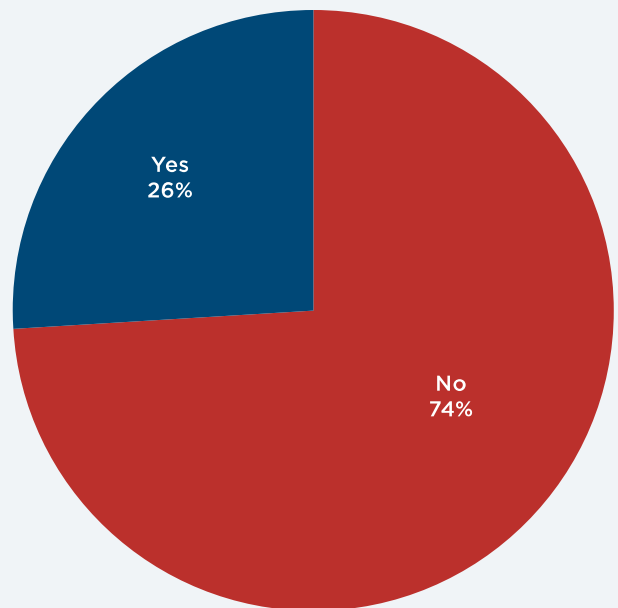
Three out of every four workers indicated that their organizations/agencies were understaffed, not having enough employees to meet important goals such as serving every person in need of help.

Further, far too many workplaces were grappling with high rates of employee turnover — 71 percent of respondents said that this was an issue at their jobs. For employees, the results associated with high turnover included increased stress (90 percent) and overwork (64 percent). They also reported the following impacts:

- **Employee Despondency.** Several people mentioned words like “burnout,” “low morale,” “lack of motivation,” “underappreciated,” “hopelessness,” “disgruntled,” and “apathy.”
- **Threats to Funding.** Multiple people mentioned turnover as a factor preventing the fulfillment of service contracts and grant deliverables, potentially leading to losses of funding.
- **Low-Quality Staffing.** According to one person, “We keep toxic staff due to staffing issues because it’s hard to fill positions.” Another mentioned an overreliance on volunteers who lack commitment (therefore putting more stress on staff).
- **Inefficient Use of Resources.** Some respondents spoke about constantly holding new employee trainings, which costs time and resources. At least one person mentioned resources being wasted on regularly paying existing employees for overtime.

Does your organization/agency have enough employees to meet its goals?

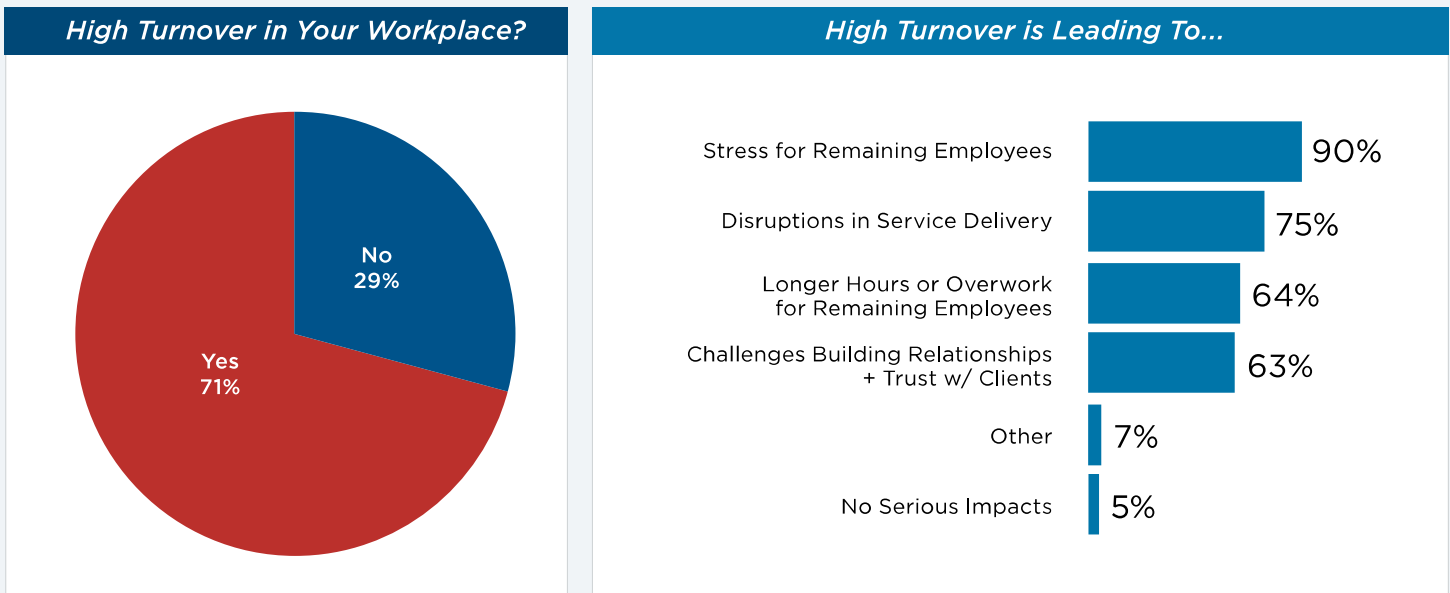
(for example, serving all people who need help or meeting all your administrative requirements)



- **Leadership Challenges.** Employees indicated that it was hard to trust leadership in such environments. Building staff cohesion is difficult. And “leadership can’t make strategic plans because they only think in crisis mode.”
- **Personal Dangers and Sacrifices.** With high turnover and not enough staffing, existing staff are sometimes put in physically dangerous situations. And some indicated not being able to take time off due to staffing challenges (therefore losing earned leave).
- **Organizational/Agency Losses.** With turnover, institutional knowledge is lost. And some respondents reported that their work environments have led to lost trust and respect from partnering agencies, damaging their relationships.

“There is less consistency in service delivery due to insufficient training. Supervisors are typically too busy trying to hire people to train the ones they already have. The newbie is thrown into new challenges without knowing what they need to. There is such a high demand for services but regardless of how busy we are, the client deserves that support person to be competent and well-trained.” — Survey Respondent

High Employee Turnover



Undoubtedly, these various factors impact clients. For example, threats to funding can translate into diminished service offerings, and situations that are dangerous for staff may also be dangerous for clients. Further, the survey revealed issues that have an even more direct connection to clients.

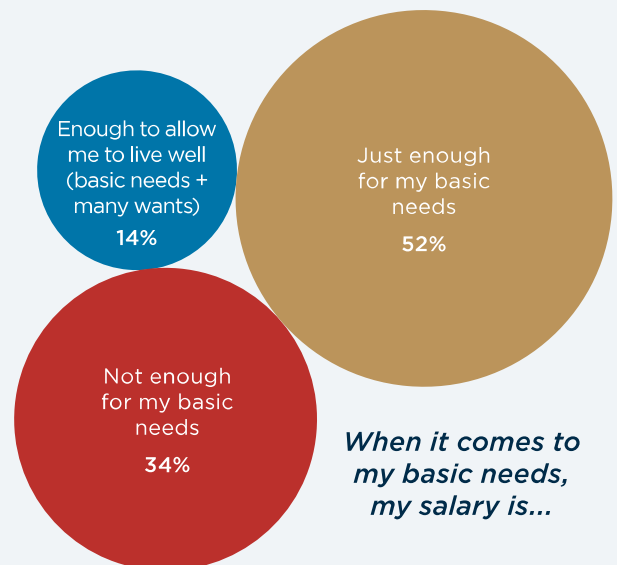
Of those in high turnover environments, 75 percent say that this factor disrupts service delivery, and 63 percent indicate that it hurts their ability to build relationships and trust with clients. In response to questions about high turnover environments, respondents also shared:

- **Realities of Service Disruption.** One person simply said, “Clients [are] kicked out.” Others spoke of service delays, the need to close clinics on days when staffing is short, and an inability to meet all client needs.
- **Crowded Caseloads.** Presumably, crowded caseloads reduce the time and attention available to individual clients.
- **Slowed Housing Progress.** A few respondents mentioned slowed progress in getting people off the streets and in ending homelessness.

Salary-Related Hardships

Human services professionals are often underpaid, often earning less than what their education and experience would suggest, and struggling to afford basics such as housing. Thus, the Alliance asked a series of questions designed to understand how homeless services salaries were impacting people’s lives.

Basic Needs. A portion of respondents did not want to share their salary information. Of those responding (and working at leady 35 hours per week), 55 percent were making under \$50,000 per year. One in three said that their salaries were not enough to meet their basic needs. And, at the opposite end of the spectrum, only 14 percent said that they earned enough to live well (having basic needs and many wants met).

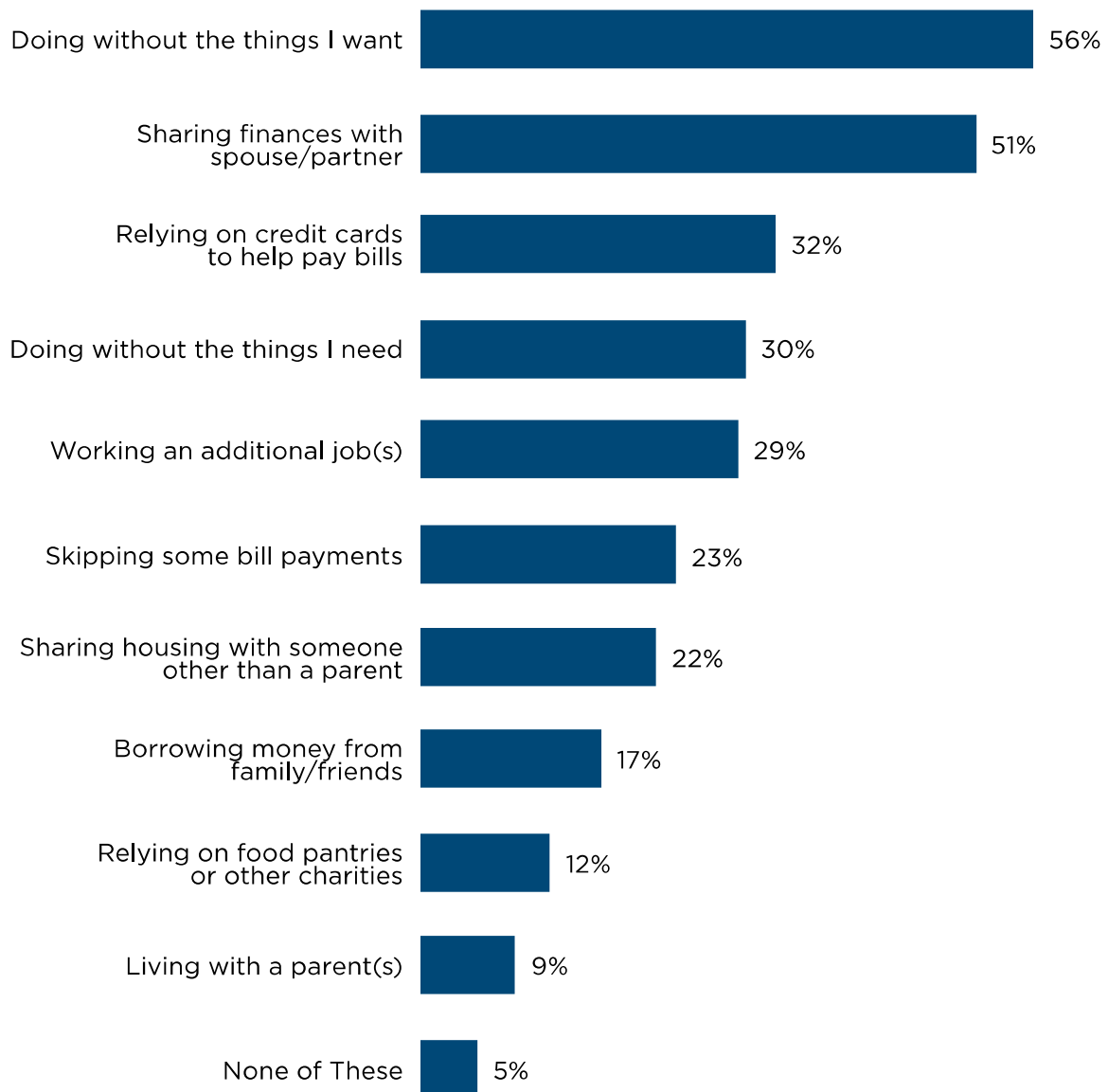


Making Ends Meet. It's clear that homeless services workers are making ends meet (or failing to do so) in a variety of ways. Most were making sacrifices — i.e., 56 percent were doing without things that they want. Beyond that, respondents roughly fell within two camps:

Economic Security from Sources Other Than Work. A number of respondents indicated some level of economic security coming from sources other than their jobs. Chief among them was sharing resources with a spouse/partner (51 percent) or a parent (9 percent). Survey takers wrote in other examples, such as pensions from previous jobs, stock portfolios, real estate holdings (i.e., being a landlord, having paid of their mortgage, or profiting from the sale of property), inheritances, no educational debt, and child support and alimony.

Some of the people in this category may not be living luxuriously, but they have other sources of income that are helping them to make ends meet in ways that are relatively unharmed to their personal well-being.

The Following Allow Me to Make Ends Meet ...

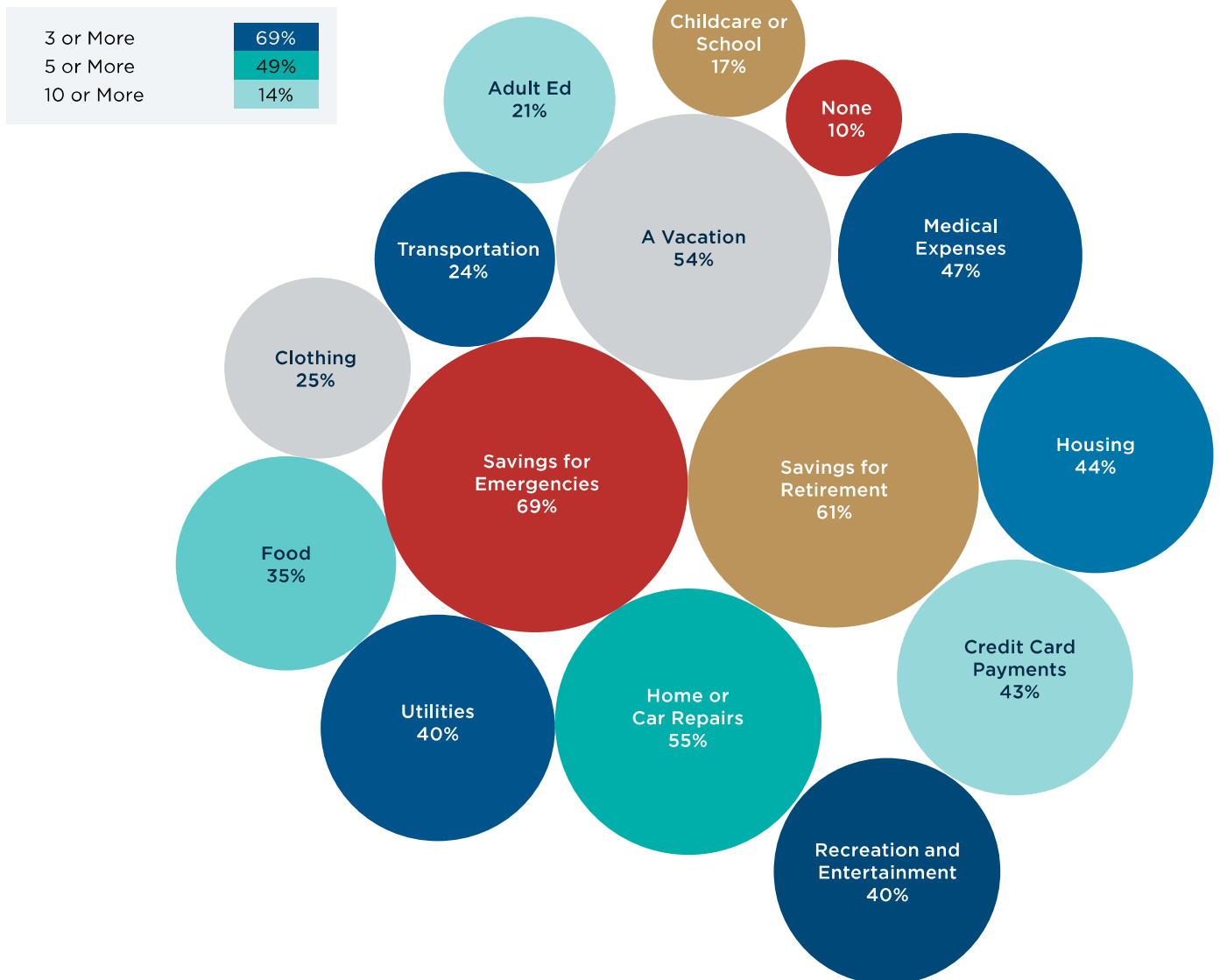


Clearly Struggling Financially. Other respondents mentioned factors that are associated with concerning levels of financial hardship, such as relying on credit cards to pay bills (32 percent) or relying on charities (12 percent). Some of the write-in answers included taking out several personal loans, having teenage children take jobs to help out, donating plasma, skipping meals, and filing for bankruptcy. A few people indicated that they themselves were experiencing homelessness or relying on government programs targeting people living in poverty (e.g., subsidized housing and energy assistance).

Some workers may be spreading themselves thin. Twenty-nine percent of respondents said they work an additional job(s). Others mentioned an at-home business and having multiple “side hustles.”

Finally, survey takers flagged other areas that may prove concerning. First, there were those who mentioned the value of not having to make student loan payments due to COVID relief measures. That relief expired in the fall of 2023, which may have a sizable impact on homeless services workers — a significant number of whom have obtained varying levels of post-secondary education. A second concern is that at least two people indicated that they were making ends meet by not having children — thus, salaries for the field may be impacting significant areas of life like family planning.

Over the Last Year, I've Worried About Paying For...

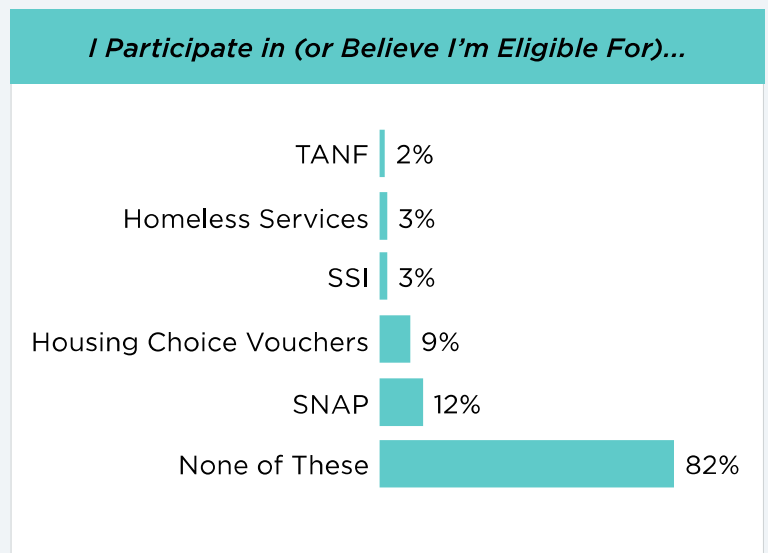
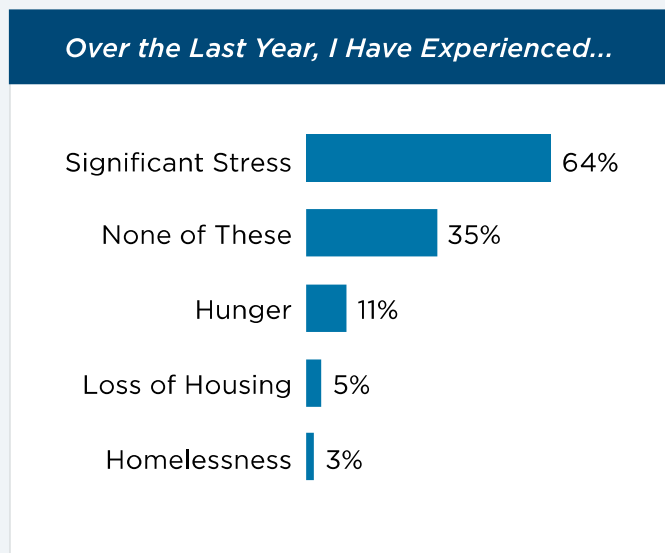


Worries About Paying for Needs and Wants.

The survey dug a little deeper into the types of things workers may be worried about paying for in their efforts to make ends meet. The respondents indicated items that severely threaten their financial security, like savings for emergencies (69 percent). They also flagged challenges that contribute to a happy life, such as vacations (54 percent). Most concerning are their worries about paying for basic necessities like food (35 percent) and utilities (40 percent). Forty-four percent of these employees who are focused on helping others find housing are worried about how they will pay for their own.

Poverty Indicators. Finally, the survey probed whether there were portions of the workforce in the nation’s most dire financial circumstances. Salaries are a source of stress for most workers (64 percent). Much smaller numbers shared signs of other poverty indicators. Notably, some were themselves experiencing homelessness — living in temporary housing programs and cars.

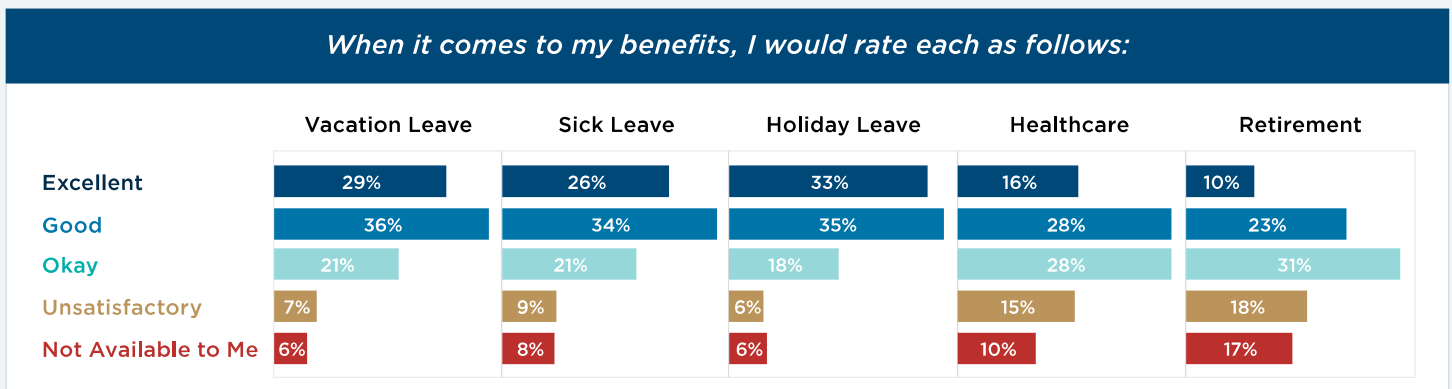
Poverty Indicators Rooted in Current Salary



Benefits

Survey respondents are largely content with their benefits, rating each type as being at least “okay.” Workers are least satisfied with their healthcare and retirement benefits.

Unfortunately, a slice of workers completely lack access to certain offerings. Respondents were least likely to have retirement benefits – 16 percent of all those responding lacked them.



Workplace Challenges

The Alliance asked about other challenges of working in homeless services. Previously expressing altruistic reasons for entering the profession, many respondents identified factors rooted in concerns about the people they serve. The biggest identified workplace challenges were 1) frustrations associated with not being able to help more people (69 percent) and 2) stress and worries about the well-being of clients (60 percent).

Within my current job, I am experiencing the following challenges...

Frustration (Can't give more people housing and services)	69%
Stress/worry about the well-being of clients	60%
Being overworked	46%
Limited rewards or wins tied to work	37%
Overly burdensome paperwork requirements	36%
Limited opportunities to advance in my career	35%
Limited authority to make decisions	25%
Lack of respect for my opinions and contributions	21%
Fears for my safety	13%
None of these	9%
Other	6%
Discrimination or uncomfortable situations (Race/Ethnicity)	6%
Discrimination or uncomfortable situations (Gender)	5%
Discrimination or uncomfortable situations (LGBTQ Identity)	3%

More individualized challenges like being overworked (46 percent) were also highly represented. And, with the opportunity to write in additional challenges, the following also stood out:

Bureaucracy. Several respondents expressed frustration with funding requirements, both those imposed by the federal government and foundations. Respondents also mentioned database concerns (i.e., having to enter the same information into two databases and systems not being user-friendly) and funding reimbursement delays that impact organizational functioning.

Management Challenges. Some respondents indicated concerns about management and office politics. Such concerns occur across fields and generally within the world of work. However, there should be some exploration of how the stresses of this work and high turnover impact homeless services workplaces. These factors pose unique leadership challenges and may affect team building and cohesion.

Other Forms of Discrimination. The survey specifically asked about workplace discrimination based on race, gender, and LGBTQ identity. Workers wrote in experiences with coworkers rooted in age, disability, religion, and lived experience of homelessness. And at least one respondent was concerned about the discrimination faced by his/her clients.

Worries About Other Staff Members. Multiple managers were concerned about their staff being overworked and underpaid. Some people were just generally concerned about the well-being of their peers.

Job Insecurity. A couple of respondents worried about the insecurity of funding streams and, therefore, whether their jobs were at risk.

Public Perceptions. Respondents spoke about NIMBYism² and an absence of support from their communities.

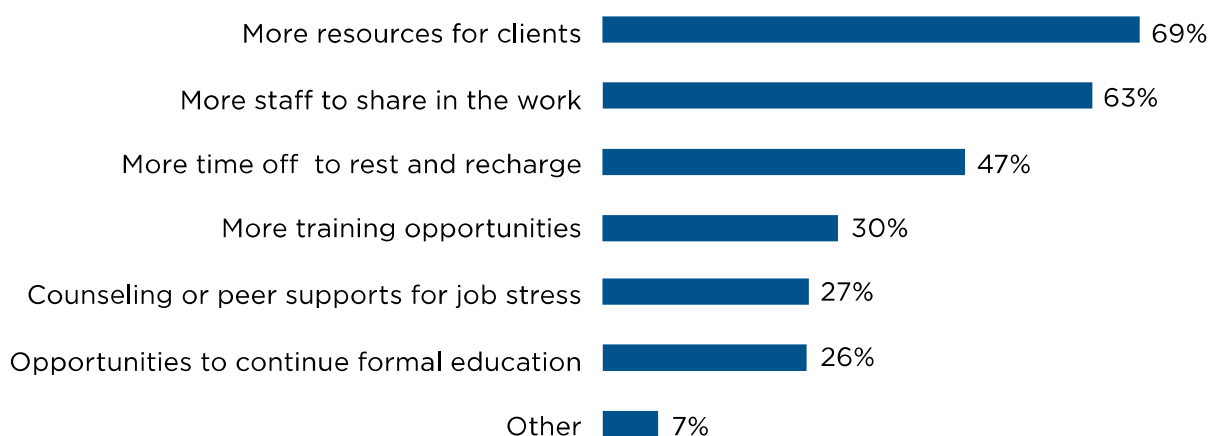
2 “NIMBY” stands for Not in My Back Yard. Merriam-Webster further defines the term as follows: “opposition to the locating of something considered undesirable (such as a prison or incinerator) in one’s neighborhood.”

“... We are also faced with constant misinformation, fear, and anger from community members who don't understand factors that lead to a person becoming unhoused. Additionally, landlords put up several barriers to being able to obtain or maintain housing for our clients.” — Survey Respondent

Workplace Needs

When asked the question about job-related needs, participants echoed responses similar to others noted elsewhere in the survey. For example, respondents want resources to help them better serve clients, and resources to provide relief for understaffed workplaces. Sizable numbers also requested more training and supports to manage on-the-job stress. Nearly half (47 percent) wanted more time off to rest and recharge. Their comments suggested barriers to using paid time off. As one respondent put it, “[I need the] ability to use the time off I have earned. Work is so busy I now lose PTO each year as there is too much work to do, not enough time.”

Things I Still Need to Do My Job Well



When asked to fill in “other” needs, an overwhelming majority took the opportunity to find various and diverse ways of reiterating the need for better salaries and benefits. Some of these suggestions were quite modest. For example, one survey taker simply wanted a yearly cost of living raise.

Otherwise, individual people offered specific asks that could easily be grouped into categories, including:

Funding stability for their agencies/ organizations (e.g., multi-year funding cycles and unrestricted funding)

Student loan repayment assistance

Executive and other types of mentorship opportunities

Adequate physical workspaces

Mental health leave

Technology upgrades (e.g., non-refurbished computers, work cell phones, paid Zoom accounts, useful software)

New types of staffing (e.g., maintenance workers for workspaces, security guards, and childcare)

Career ladders

Appreciation (e.g., from the community, perks like monthly lunches)

Home buying programs for employees

Remote or at-home work opportunities

Schedule flexibility

Shorter work weeks

“The Trainings that are required for us as staff are hard to get. It is like a feeding frenzy to sign up. Often I can never get any of the required trainings because they are full. It reminds me of trying to get beyonce tickets.” – Survey Respondent

Future Plans

Given some of the stated challenges, one might expect that a number of people would be contemplating an exit from a career in the homeless services field. Indeed, 37 percent of those participating in the Alliance’s survey said they were considering leaving their jobs. By far, the most cited reasons for potentially leaving were limited salary and benefits (73 percent) and on-the-job stress (68 percent). Within the open comment space, many decided to go deeper into issues related to these topics:

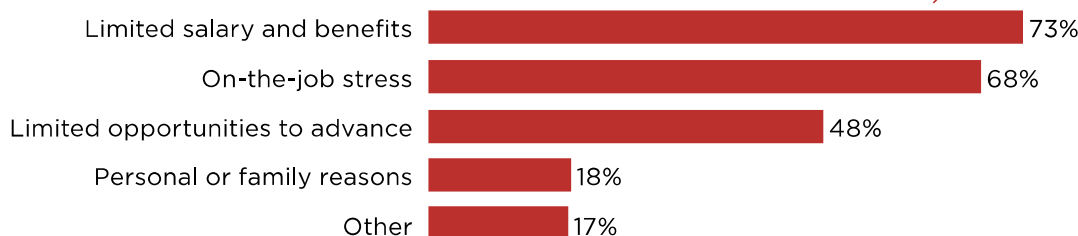
- “I’m tired and though I’m finally in a decent place financially. It took 12 years and I worry what my life will be like when I retire.”
- “Financial need. I’ll lose my house if I can’t make more.”
- “[Stresses of] witnessing participants pass away and seeing participants cycle back through the shelter system after being housed.”
- “I love this work. This work is my calling. But I should be paid fairly. And I get dismissed when I even bring it up. As someone with over 15 years [of experience] . . . my salary should be more than 50k a year. And our board of supervisors and leaders act like this is unreasonable.”
- “With my current job, I co-manage a 24/7 shelter with a team of 23 people. I cannot have a life outside of the job because I am frequently called into work in the shelter even when I am not on-call. It makes it difficult to make plans outside of work which contributes to resentment and burnout.”

Notably, there were some individuals who had seemingly innocuous reasons for contemplating an exit from their job; for instance, it was time for them to retire or they were interested in a new type of work. A segment of respondents were frustrated with working with clients, citing a lack of appreciation and follow-through on their part.

Finally, multiple people simply seemed disillusioned by the lack of resources to solve the problem and the lack of help from the federal government:

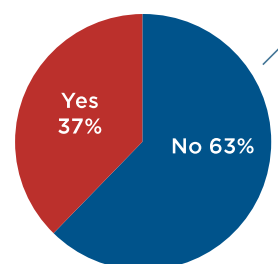
- “Burned out. Systems are broken. Tired of fight for change.”
- “Feels like never-ending crisis.”
- “It is depressing to see agency level staff work so hard while the federal policy and budgeting is so weak. It’s hard to know what the solutions could be — but to know that they will never be achieved.”
- “Depression at feeling that no matter what we do in our CoC, the problem cannot be solved without federal intervention that I don’t see coming. The work both at direct service level and administrative level feels Sisyphean.”

Despite all of the above, 63 percent of respondents **were not** considering leaving their jobs.



Considering leaving your job?

If so, why?



Moving Forward

The goal of ending homelessness cannot be achieved without changes to the status quo. Workers in the field are daily managing weighty challenges. Professionally, they are trying to serve people within organizations that are understaffed and experiencing high turnover. Personally, they are worried about paying their own bills — including how they will keep themselves housed. Their well-being directly impacts the well-being of clients and the movement to end homelessness.

Implementing Systemic Solutions

Supporting the homeless services workforce is a major policy need that can't be met with one-off or simple solutions. These policy and practice changes cannot happen without major increases in investments. All levels of government and private sector foundations have a role to play in ensuring progress. Significantly, the federal government often packs the biggest punch in terms of its reach and resources. Thus, advocacy directed at Congress and federal administrative agencies is critical. Federal agencies also have a role to play in 1) [reducing administrative burdens](#) on homeless services leaders, so that they can focus more attention on managing workforce challenges, and 2) offering technical assistance and other supports to help the field emerge from the current crisis.

The Alliance is committed to working with the homeless services field and other national partners to further develop and promote needed solutions. Necessary change may not happen overnight, but there is no other choice but to move forward if the nation wants to reach important goals like ensuring [appropriate implementation of Housing First](#) and ending homelessness.

Low pay, high turnover, and lack of resources are a resounding theme throughout responses to this survey of homeless service providers across the country. It is clear that this sector will not be able to make progress until significant funding is allocated to address this crisis.





Save the Dates

SHPA Advocacy Day

April 16th & 17th

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

Martin Luther King Jr.

April 16- Advocacy Day
- Prep Session (1:00p-4:00p)

April 17-Advocacy Day
Legislator Breakfast (8:30a-10:00a)
Legislator Meetings (9:00a-4:00p)

Contact: Jeff Metzger
Director of Government Affairs
j.metzger@shpa-il.org



SHPA **ADVOCACY** **DAY**

THE FUTURE IS NOW

April 16 & 17, 2024

