

View as HTML

View as text

Close Preview Window

**From:** National Coalition for the Homeless  
**To:** {EMAIL\_ADDRESS}  
**Subject:** Board & Staff: We Can End Homelessness Together!

# NEWSLETTER



**Dear NCH Board and Staff:**

**Thank you for all you do to support the mission and operation of NCH! After you read this edition of NCH News, forward this email to 5 people you know who share your passion for social justice. Let them know [how they can help](#) to end homelessness too!**

In the September 18, 2009 issue of *National Coalition for the Homeless News*:

1. Survey Finds Living on Florida Streets is Dangerous
2. Public Policy Update
3. NCH Welcomes New Interns
4. Thank You from the National Coalition for the Homeless

### **Survey Finds Living on Florida Streets is Dangerous**

During the summer of 2009, the National Coalition for the Homeless, with the support of 20 AmeriCorps\*VISTA Volunteers and fourteen VISTA Summer Associates, surveyed 1,343 homeless people in fourteen Florida counties concerning their experiences with violence.





Volunteers asked an assortment of questions, and the resulting answers were both informative and alarming. When asked the question, "How do you think you are treated by those who are not homeless?" twenty-nine percent said they were "treated poorly", twenty-nine percent said they were "ignored", and thirty-two percent said they were "treated well".

The most disturbing answers volunteers found, however, were to the question "In the last four years have you been attacked in your community by someone who you thought was not homeless?" twenty-six percent of those surveyed responded "yes", nearly a quarter of these reporting that they had been attacked more than once.

Another National Coalition for the Homeless preliminary survey of thirty-five homeless people in Orange County found that forty-six percent of respondents "had been attacked in the last four years by someone who they thought was not homeless". A larger and more comprehensive survey is being conducted in this county by the Homeless Network of Central Florida with the help of NCH's AmeriCorps\*VISTA Volunteers.

Respondents' attitudes toward the police were mixed. Twenty-five percent of those surveyed reported that the police were "not helpful", while twenty-six percent reported that police were "helpful". Similarly, twenty-one per cent of respondents were "not confident" of the police department's ability to protect them, while twenty-nine per cent "were".

Despite polarized attitudes toward law enforcement, seventy-seven per cent of respondents stated that they "would report a crime if they witnessed someone being attacked" and fourteen per cent said they "sometimes" would.

The fourteen counties surveyed:

Escambia  
Flagler  
Hillsborough  
Leon  
Manatee  
Marion  
Miami-Dade  
Monroe  
Orange  
Palm Beach  
Pasco  
Santa Rosa  
Sarasota  
Volusia

Similar surveys from around the country (2006 to 2009):

2006:

- According to a national survey done by the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, 18 per cent of homeless people experienced violence on the streets.

2007:

- Broward County, Florida: In a January 2007 survey of 4,000 homeless people done by the Coalition to End Homelessness, 25 per cent reported being victims of violence

2009:

- Broward County, Florida: In a January 2009 survey of 1,321 homeless people done by the Coalition to End Homelessness, 20 per cent have experienced violence.

2009:

- Washington, DC: In a spring of 2009 survey of 90 homeless people done by the National Coalition for the Homeless, 24 per cent said they had been physically attacked by a non-homeless person.

- Washington, DC: In an ongoing study that began in 2008 by the DC Dept. of Human Services found that 35 per cent of the 3,535 homeless people surveyed had been physically attacked.

- Long Beach, CA: In a July 2009 survey of 350 homeless people done by Long Beach Connections found that 40 per cent had encountered violence on the streets.

## Public Policy Update

### Federal Homelessness Plan



The National Coalition for the Homeless and other national homeless organizations are coordinating efforts to influence the shape and content of a federal plan to end homelessness. Under the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act signed into law earlier this year. The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) is required to develop such a plan by May 2010. On September 2, 2009 the National Coalition for the Homeless and others met with representatives of the USICH to talk with them about the process for developing and implementing the plan.

Advocates started by encouraging Interagency Council on Homelessness to include consumer, provider and advocate voices in the conversation, establishing Issue task forces to build the content of the plan. In addition advocates asked for an opportunity to make a presentation at at least one time per year to cabinet secretaries who belong to the USICH in at least one of their meetings each year.

Advocates stressed the importance of inter-agency participation and co-operation in development of the plan.

Also advocates emphasized the importance of the plan having concrete goals and accountability. Neil Donovan, Executive Director at the National Coalition for the Homeless, voiced the need to make sure that everyone is a part of the conversation that needs to be. National Coalition for the Homeless Board Member David Pirtle gave a forceful reminder that ultimately it is people experiencing homelessness to whom

we are accountable and it is important to make sure they are a part of the conversation.

Advocates presented a letter they had sent earlier to President Obama which summarized these recommendations. A copy of the letter may be found on the [National Coalition for the Homeless' website](#).

### **Healthcare Reform**

The National Coalition for the Homeless has associated itself with other national homeless organizations, led by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, in identifying five policy elements that are critical for people experiencing homelessness and that must be included in health care reform legislation currently being developed by Congress. Those elements are:

- Medicaid must be expanded to cover all low-income adults at or below 200 percent of the poverty line (while eliminating categorical requirements). Currently approximately seventy percent of people experiencing homelessness are uninsured.
- "Health coverage" must include behavioral health services. Failure to include behavioral health services at parity with medical problems would be particularly devastating to homeless people, who suffer from these disorders at disproportionate rates.
- Ensuring affordable coverage for everyone means \$0 out-of-pocket expenses. Tax credits, subsidies and requirements are not realistic ways to help those in the lowest income groups, especially when not all low-income people are covered by Medicaid.
- The two year waiting period before receiving coverage from Medicare when approved for Social Security Disability Insurance must be eliminated. It is irrational to ask someone to remain uninsured after their need for health services has been identified and coverage approved.
- Finally any health care reform proposal must ensure a robust primary care system that focuses on access, prevention and wellness, eliminates financial barriers for the lowest income groups, and works to eliminate health disparities.

A copy of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council letter on health care reform may be found at <http://www.nhchc.org/HealthreformlettertoSenate.pdf>.

In addition, the National Coalition for the Homeless calls readers' attention to and associates itself with an action alert from the National Health Care for the Homeless Council recommending that readers contact their Representatives about health care reform. The action alert can be found here <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs048/1102502633393/archive/1102666208318.html>.

### **Hate Crimes (H.R. 3419)**

Representatives Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), Robert Wexler (D-FL), and twelve other U.S. Representatives introduced the Hate Crimes Against the Homeless Statistics Act (H.R. 3419) in late July. The legislation, which enjoys bipartisan support, would add homeless status to the federal reporting system on hate crimes. This would provide the FBI and advocates with crucial data to reveal the extent of bias-motivated crimes committed against homeless people.

The National Coalition for the Homeless extends a warm congratulations to Representatives Johnson and Wexler as well as the other twelve original cosponsors of H.R. 3419 for their willingness to stand up for the safety and protection of people experiencing homelessness. Other Members of Congress joining Johnson and Wexler at the time of the bill's introduction were: Steve Cohen (TN), Danny Davis (IL), Marcia Fudge (OH), Alcee Hastings (FL), Dennis Kucinich (OH), Zoe Lofgren (CA), James McGovern (MA), Gwen Moore (WI), Grace Napolitano (CA), Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL) and Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL). These original cosponsors include four members of the House Judiciary Committee, one Republican, and members of the Black, Hispanic, and Progressive Caucuses.

Now that Congress is back in session, the National Coalition for the Homeless urges people experiencing homelessness, homeless advocates, and concerned Americans to contact their U.S. Representatives and request them to join as co-sponsors of the Hate Crimes Against the Homeless Statistics Act (H.R. 3419). An action alert with a message and action instructions may be found at: [http://www.nationalhomeless.org/advocacy/action\\_alerts/HCAHSA\\_%20ActionAlert0709.pdf](http://www.nationalhomeless.org/advocacy/action_alerts/HCAHSA_%20ActionAlert0709.pdf). NCH also encourages organizations to sign our joint letter supporting H.R. 3419 which can be found here at: [http://nationalhomeless.org/advocacy/HCAHSA\\_%20SignOnLetter-0709.pdf](http://nationalhomeless.org/advocacy/HCAHSA_%20SignOnLetter-0709.pdf).

### **Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization**

The National Coalition for the Homeless joined with eleven other organizations concerned about homelessness to issue a set of recommendations for improving the public workforce investment system. The organizations urged Congress and the Administration to advance them through reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act.

The organizations note that the public workforce investment system was established to help all Americans prepare for employment and re-enter the workforce. Some publicly funded programs do reach people who are homeless, but serious impediments limit this population's access to workforce programs. A key barrier is the current emphasis on providing "core" services at the expense of "enhanced" services and vocational training. Training and intensive services are essential to many persons experiencing homelessness who seek to join the workforce. Admittedly, many of these individuals offer a constellation of challenges that exceed those presented by the majority who use the workforce system. Far from receiving incentives to meet these needs, however, workforce authorities are neither rewarded for serving people who experience homelessness nor encouraged to do so. Moreover, workforce system planners and practitioners lack the information, resources and support they need to implement evidence-based workforce development practices that have proven successful with homeless populations.

Recommendations being offered by the homelessness organizations include:

- Require Workforce Authorities' Plans to Address the Needs of Persons who are Homeless. Require Workforce Authorities to Report the Housing Status of those Served.
- Authorize Homeless Navigators at One Stop Centers.
- Enable Unaccompanied Homeless Youth to Access Workforce Services.

- Authorize the Development of Appropriate Performance and Outcome Measures.
- Offer Homeless Workforce System Development Grants.
- Create a National Center to Support Workforce Development for the Homeless.
- Increase Funding for Essential Services.

The national homelessness organizations invite endorsements of the recommendations document from additional national, state, and local organizations. To view the recommendations, please visit, [http://nationalhomeless.org/advocacy/WIA\\_ReAuth-0709.pdf](http://nationalhomeless.org/advocacy/WIA_ReAuth-0709.pdf). To add your organization name to the recommendations, please send a request to be added to [cbontrager@nationalhomeless.org](mailto:cbontrager@nationalhomeless.org).

### **National Coalition for the Homeless Welcomes New Interns**

We are happy to be joined this month by our fall interns: Caitlin Buchman, Anne Pfersdorff, John Randolph, Holden Sheftel, Adam Sirgany and Katherine Streit.

Caitlin currently attends American University in Washington, DC. She developed an interest in the needs of poor Americans after volunteering with the Salvation Army in her hometown. She will be helping with the research, organization and formatting of our reports. Caitlin is considering an eventual career in politics. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, playing soccer, and drinking a good cup of coffee.

Anne hails from France, where she attends business school in Marseille. She cares deeply about the issue of homelessness, and came to the National Coalition for the Homeless to have "a unique experience that would be impossible in France". After graduating, she would like to work for a non-governmental organization. Her favorite pastimes include reading, drawing, rugby and swimming.

John goes to American University. He was drawn to the National Coalition for the Homeless because he "liked how it helps so many people." John has a great interest in playing and listening to music.

Holden just began his first semester at American University. He saw that the National Coalition for the Homeless "actually produces results" and wanted to take part in our efforts. He will be contributing research and writing to our criminalization report. His hobbies include music, running, and martial arts.

Adam majors in Political Science at Knox College in Galesburg, IL. He is troubled by the disparity of wealth in this country, and is interning at the National Coalition for the Homeless because "NCH seems to be taking action." He will be editing press releases, action alerts and factsheets. After graduation, he would like to travel, and perhaps volunteer with the Peace Corps or AmeriCorps VISTA. He enjoys biking, hiking, playing saxophone, and meeting new people.

Katherine double-majors in psychology and sociology at American University. She is interested in our grassroots advocacy work, particularly our direct engagement with people experiencing homelessness. She will be researching and editing our report on tent cities. Katherine plans on career in social services and advocacy. Her interests include biking, hiking, trying new foods, and working with people with disabilities.

**Thank You from the  
National Coalition for the Homeless**

Thanks to the following recent contributors:

Mary Virginia Abe  
Aberdeen Foundation  
Bartholomew Family Chiropractic  
Daniel Bell  
Keri Daley  
Ralph Deberardinis and Donna Distefano  
Kelly Force  
Edna Wardlaw Charitable Trust  
Greenville Student Outreach  
Plasmanet, Inc.  
Paul Kohler  
Erik Lehmann  
Janet Lyman  
Sara McHale  
Philip Nubel  
Mark Ortmeier  
Veronica Rice  
Deborah and Douglas Roberts  
Lauren and Daniel Scher  
Angela Shearer and Donald Shearer, Jr.  
Andrea Scheurer and Daniel Monaghan  
Nancy Weil  
Tracy Wiles

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

National Coalition for the Homeless  
2201 P Street, NW  
Washington, District of Columbia 20037-1033

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.

