



Bridging Opportunities Leading to Advancement and Nurturing Individual Economic Development

Commonly Asked Questions

What is homelessness?

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines an individual as experiencing homelessness in four categories: literally homeless; imminent risk of homelessness; homeless under other federal statutes; and fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence.

***Literal Homeless** is defined as an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence meaning: having a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation; living in a publically or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels/motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); or is exiting an institution where the individual resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.*

***Imminent Risk of Homelessness** is defined as an individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that: the residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance; no subsequent residence has been identified; and the individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.*

***Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes** is defined as unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or family with children/youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless, but who: are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes; have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application; have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the preceding 60 days; and can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers.*

***Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence** is defined as any individual or family who: is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence; has no other residence; and lacks resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing*

Additional information regarding homelessness in the United States can be found in the 2015 State of Homelessness Report.



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What should I do if I am homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless?

BOLANIE Enterprises Incorporated (BEI) provides direct services via referral.

If you are experiencing homelessness, please contact any of the emergency shelter agencies in Guilford County. If you are at-risk of losing your housing in Guilford County call the housing Hotline at 336-691-9521. You may also contact 2-1-1, a free service of the United Way that provides information about many resources. Dial 211 or visit www.nc211.org.

Are people who are experiencing homelessness different from the population in whole?

One of the most common misconceptions regarding homelessness is that individuals who are experiencing homelessness are different from the general population. This is simply NOT TRUE. The only difference between an individual experiencing homelessness and an individual in the general population is that a person experiencing homelessness does not have a house to go home to. Many individuals in the general population is just a paycheck, maybe two from financial destitution that leads to homelessness. Members of the general population struggle with both physical and mental health issues as well as emotional and substance issues. The biggest difference between members of the general population and individuals experiencing homelessness is having access to a support network of family and friends. Most often individuals experiencing homelessness have exhausted their support network.

Individuals experiencing homelessness have chosen that life, right?

No one chooses to live on the street, they may have learned to accept it, but it was not a goal they established for themselves. Research indicates that even if an individual claims they want to be homeless, they desire safety of having a place to call their own.

Should individual experiencing homelessness demonstrate a “readiness” to receive housing?

Research indicates the provisions of safe and affordable housing has ability to improve an individual's quality of life, in the areas of physical and mental health, substance use and employment with varying amounts of supports with varied periods of time and intensity. Readiness is not a requirement to achieve housing stability.



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Is homelessness a long-term condition?

Research indicates that many individuals who experience homelessness do so once in a lifetime, for a short period of time and rarely experience it again. With the proper supports, individuals can recover from homelessness relatively quickly. Only a small portion of the population experience homelessness for a period of a year or more. Partners Ending Homelessness conducted a Point-In-Time Count January 2017 and determined of the 573 individuals who were experiencing homelessness, 21 were considered to be experiencing chronic homelessness. That's less than 4% of the homeless population.

Does providing blankets, hygiene kits, or cash help to end homelessness?

Although blankets, hygiene kits and cash are needed, these types of supports have little to no impact on homelessness. The one solution to reducing the prevalence of is the provision of stable appropriate supports to enable a household to secure and remain housed.

Should I give money to individuals on the street claiming to be homeless?

That is truly a personal decision. Something to think about is the majority of the individuals on the street claiming to be homeless are panhandlers and are not experiencing homelessness, but view their position on the streets their job. When making the decision to give money to panhandlers use your head as well as your heart, money does very little for someone who is experiencing homelessness unless it's significant enough to help them secure housing.

Homelessness is a result of mental illness and/or substance abuse, right?

Not necessarily. Most often individuals losing stable housing may opt to move into an RV or their car, but do so as a result of financial hardship. Homelessness may also be the result of domestic violence.

Is the majority of the homeless population male?

According to the Point-In-Time Count conducted by Partners Ending Homeless in January 2017, of the 573 individuals that were experiencing homelessness, 337 were adult men, which was 59% of the homeless population at that point in time. As individuals and families continue to combat the issues of economic devastation, the numbers of children and women experiencing homelessness continues to increase.



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How can I make a difference?

When you partner with BOLANIE Enterprises Incorporated (BEI) you become a part of the solution to reduce the prevalence of chronic homelessness in Guilford County and surrounding areas. BEI Bridges Opportunities Leading to Advancement and Nurturing Individual Economic Development (BOLANIE). BEI is dedicated to innovation and excellence while delivering stable housing, employment at a livable wage, access to mental health/substance services, fostering civic engagement and sustainability via individual development escrow accounts for individuals that are experiencing chronic homelessness or at-risk of being homeless.

You can partner with BEI by clicking on the donation page and making a financial contribution; by clicking on the volunteer page and volunteering to time and skills to a BEI event; or by participating in a BEI event or enjoying a meal at BEI's Bistro and Dessert Lounge.