
UNVEILING THE HIDDEN CRISIS:

ANALYZING RURAL HOMELESSNESS AND PATHWAYS TO PROGRESS

Dan Carney
Rural Behavioral Health Conference
September 2023



GOALS FOR TODAY

- 1) Recognize the intersections between rural homelessness and other social issues, such as poverty, mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, and access to employment opportunities, in order to develop holistic and comprehensive approaches.
- 2) Identify and analyze the barriers faced by individuals experiencing homelessness in rural communities, such as limited access to housing, healthcare, transportation, and social services.
- 3) Evaluate the role of community engagement and collaboration in addressing rural homelessness, including the importance of building partnerships with local organizations, government agencies, and community members to create sustainable solutions.
- 4) Analyze the impact of policy and funding decisions on rural homelessness, and explore advocacy strategies to influence policy changes at local, regional, and national levels.
- 5) Assess the effectiveness of different housing models and supportive services in rural contexts, considering factors such as affordability, cultural sensitivity, and scalability.



HOMELESS

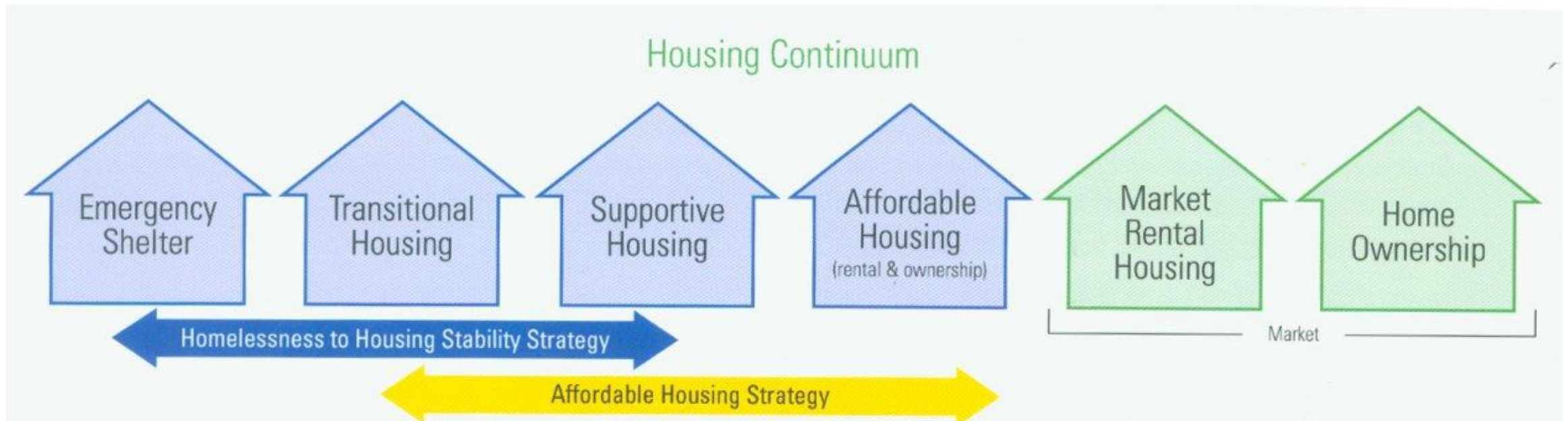
HIDDEN HOMELESS

HOUSING INSECURE

- **Multiple moves**
- **Overcrowded**
- **Doubled Up**

UNAFFORDABLE HOUSING

HOUSING IS A SYSTEM



HOUSING IS A (COMPLICATED) SYSTEM

In 2017, a coalition of community partners with an interest or concern about those who are served by or who serve in the homelessness system, met to develop a plan in response to the CoC Coordinated Entry requirements.

The expected outcomes of this more unified system include: community agreement and commitment to common principles, strategies, protocols, metrics and training; coordinated system entry and assessment tools; and a shared data information system.

Management Information System:
Web-based "cloud" technology will be necessary to effectively implement and monitor the metrics of a unified system at individual, agency, county and regional levels.

Rapid Re-Housing moves homeless persons into scattered site housing within the community before providing any services. It assists people with mid-range needs and is temporary.

Transitional housing provides programs and services to all levels of need, along with temporary housing in scattered site housing or congregate living. Upon completing programming, participants are assisted into permanent housing.

Permanent Supportive Housing houses high- to severe-need persons in scattered site or congregate living before providing services. It is partnered with intensive case management or assertive community treatment.

Westmoreland County



Services as determined by the common assessment tool are still available for these at-risk individuals and families, even if they were diverted from the housing system.

Diversion is a standardized strategy that prevents homelessness for people seeking housing support by helping them stabilize their current situation or identify immediate alternate housing arrangements. If necessary, they are connected to services and financial assistance.

Diversion and Prevention

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS
YOUTH
VETERANS
FAMILIES
CHRONIC HOMELESS

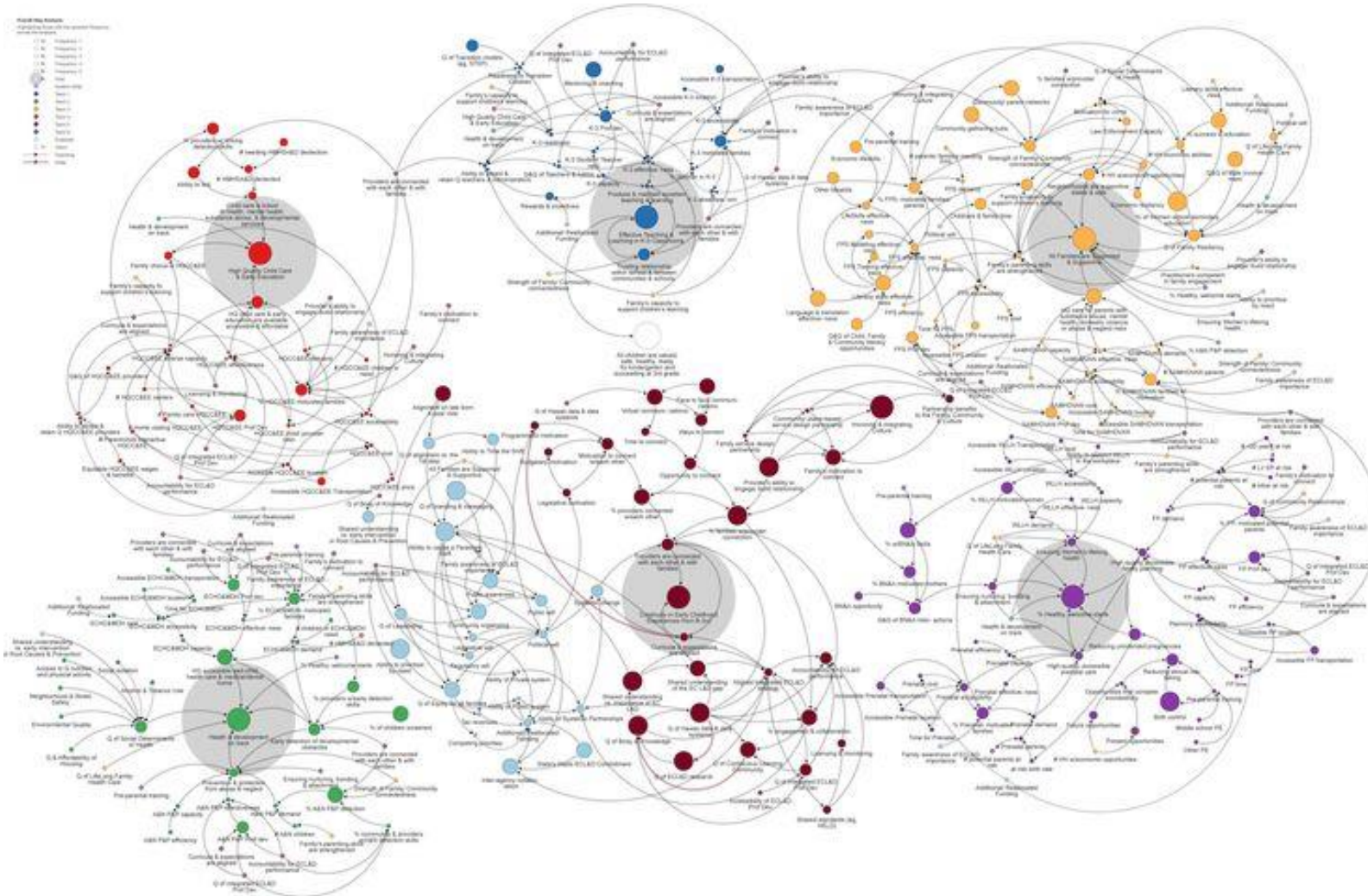
A **common assessment tool** standardizes service prioritization, which allows for the most efficient use of resources and improves consumer access to support. Coordinated access makes the system easier to navigate by leveraging the strengths of individual service providers.

Housing Triage helps the community "yield" to more vulnerable individuals by focusing limited resources on the most appropriate people or families using a standardized assessment tool and set protocols. This tool assesses level of acuity (or vulnerability) and prioritizes the most effective housing option.

Adopted from Mid-Atlantic Regional Council and Homelessness Taskforce of Greater Kansas City



HOUSING EXISTS IN A LARGER ECOSYSTEM



INTERSECTING FINDINGS: HOME QUALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

MacArthur Foundation HOW HOUSING MATTERS

macfound.org/HousingMatters

POLICY RESEARCH BRIEF

Poor Quality Housing Is Tied to Children's Emotional and Behavioral Problems

*Parents' stress from living in poor quality housing
takes a toll on children*

by REBEKAH LEVINE COLEY, TAMA LEVENTHAL,
ALICIA DOYLE LYNCH, AND MELISSA KULL

SEPTEMBER 2013

A family's home is their haven, but for families living with leaking roofs and roaches, for those who have to choose between paying for rent or for food, or for families who repeatedly move in search of higher quality or more affordable housing, one's place of refuge may not be very homey.

This brief examines how housing characteristics matter to children and families' well-being.¹ Among the various possibilities tested, poor housing quality was the most consistent and strongest predictor of emotional and behavioral problems in low-income children and youth. It also had a sizable association with school performance among older youth. Housing affected children because the stress of living in unhealthy and unsafe conditions affected parenting.

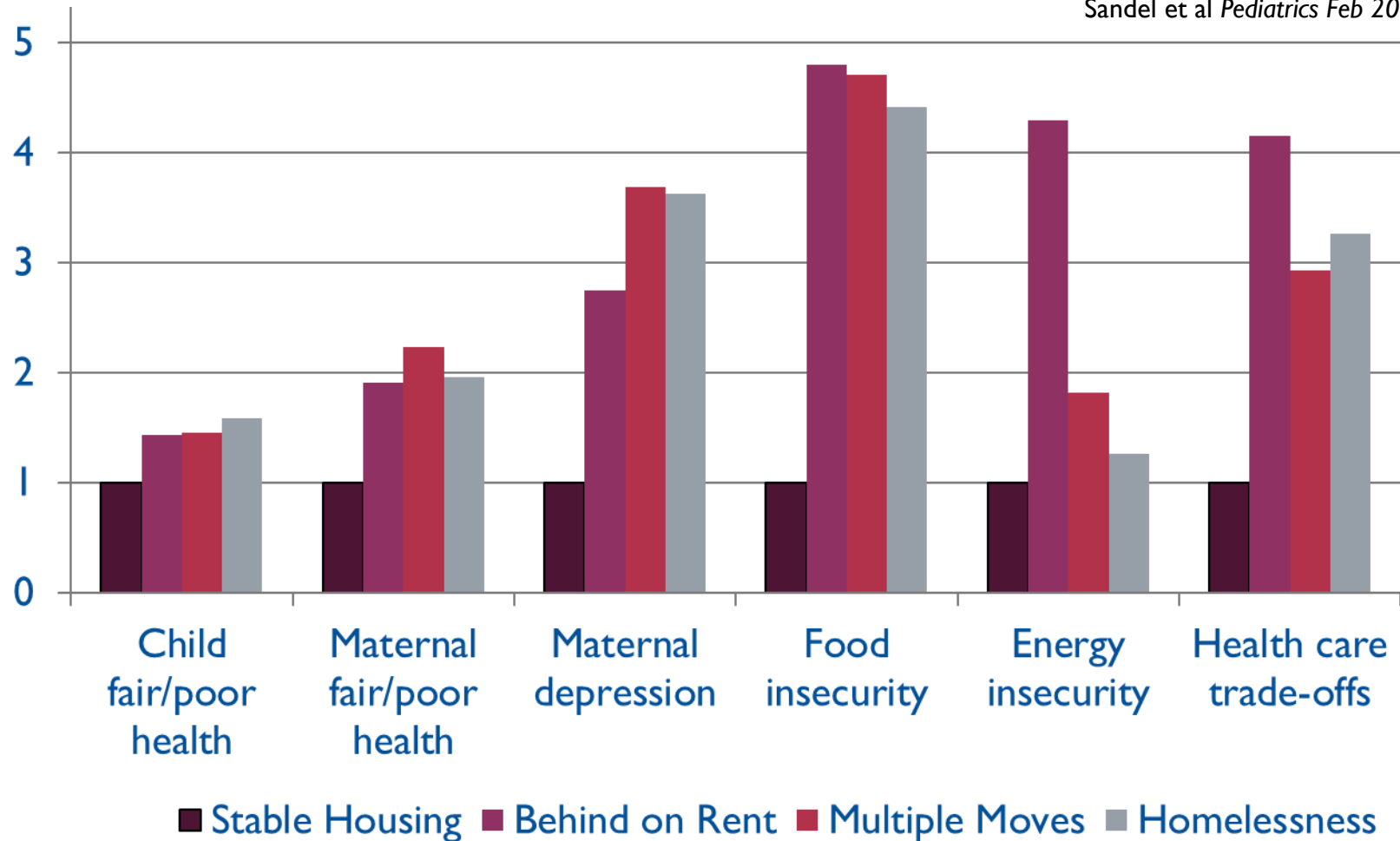
Advantages of the Current Study

Past research has identified several aspects of housing that are thought to be associated with children's development.² Researchers, for example, have found that substandard housing—exposed wiring, peeling lead paint, rodent infestation, and the like—may contribute to physiological stress in children, inhibiting their emotional stability and learning. Similarly, residential instability may interrupt peer

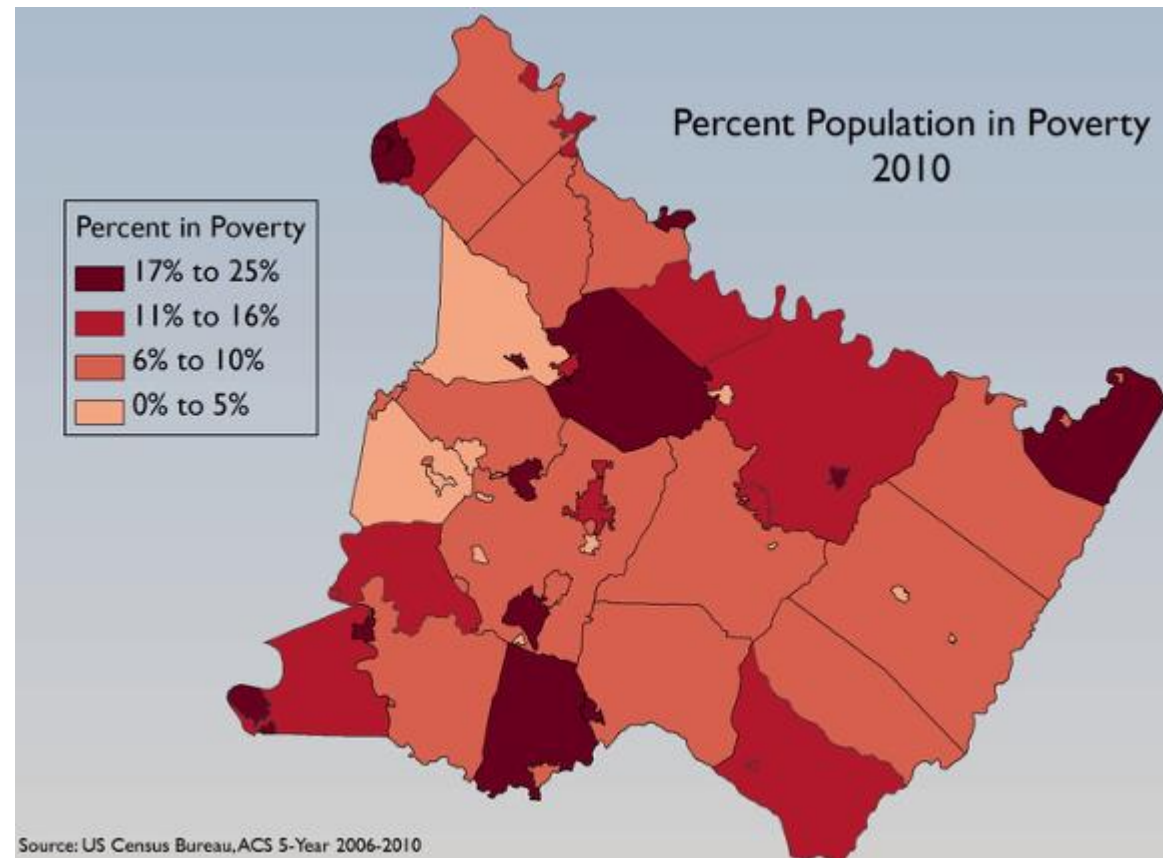
- Poor housing quality strongest predictor of emotional and behavioral problems in low-income children
- Much of association between poor housing quality and children's wellbeing operates through parental stress, parenting behaviors and mental health

INTERSECTING FINDINGS: OUTCOMES OF UNSTABLE HOUSING WITH HEALTH AND MATERIAL HARDSHIP OUTCOMES

Sandel et al *Pediatrics* Feb 2018



INTERSECTING FINDINGS: LOCATION – POVERTY AND ZIP CODE REMAIN LINKED



INTERSECTING FINDINGS: HOUSING AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS

ARTICLE

Subsidized Housing and Children's Nutritional Status

Data From a Multisite Surveillance Study

Alan Meyers, MD, MPH; Diana Cutts, MD; Debra Anne Skalicky, MPH; Timothy Heeren, PhD; John Maureen Black, PhD; Patrick Casey, MD; Nieve

Background: A critical shortage of affordable housing for low-income families continues in the United States. Children in households that are food insecure are at greater risk for adverse nutritional and health outcomes and are more vulnerable to the economic pressures of high housing costs. Only about one fourth of eligible children receive a federally financed housing subsidy. We examined the effects of such housing subsidies on the health and nutritional status of low-income

Objective: To examine the relationship between receiving housing subsidies and nutritional and health status among young children in low-income families, especially those that are food insecure.

Design: Cross-sectional observational study.

Setting and Participants: From August 1998 to 2003, the Children's Sentinel Nutrition Assessment Program interviewed caregivers of children 2 to 5 years of age in pediatric clinics and emergency departments at 6 sites (Arkansas, California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Washington, DC). Interviews assessed demographics, perceived child health, the US Household Food Security Scale, and public assistance program participation. Children's weight at the time of the visit was documented. The study sample consisted of all renter households identified as low income by their participation in at least 1 means-tested program.

Kids in Food Insecure Families were TWO FOLD less likely to be underweight if they had a housing subsidy than similar kids who were eligible but did not receive a subsidized home

...ometric indications of undernutrition than those of comparable families not receiving housing subsidies, especially if the family is not only low income but also food insecure.

Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2005;159:551-556

HISTORICAL CONTEXT IS IMPORTANT

What if Edvard Munch was really trying to paint a dog with long ears, but he wasn't a good painter and people got all excited about his painting, so he just kinda went along with it?

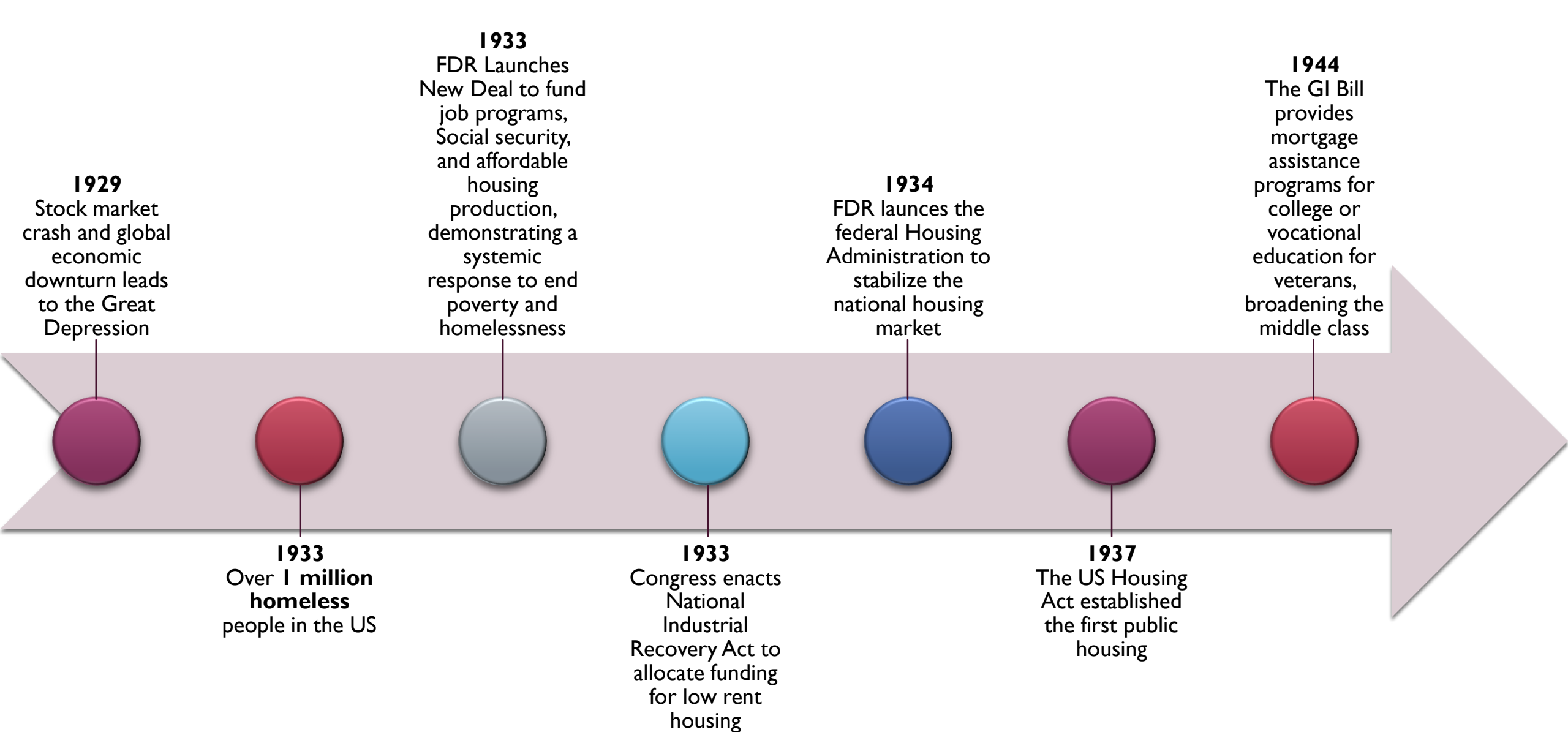


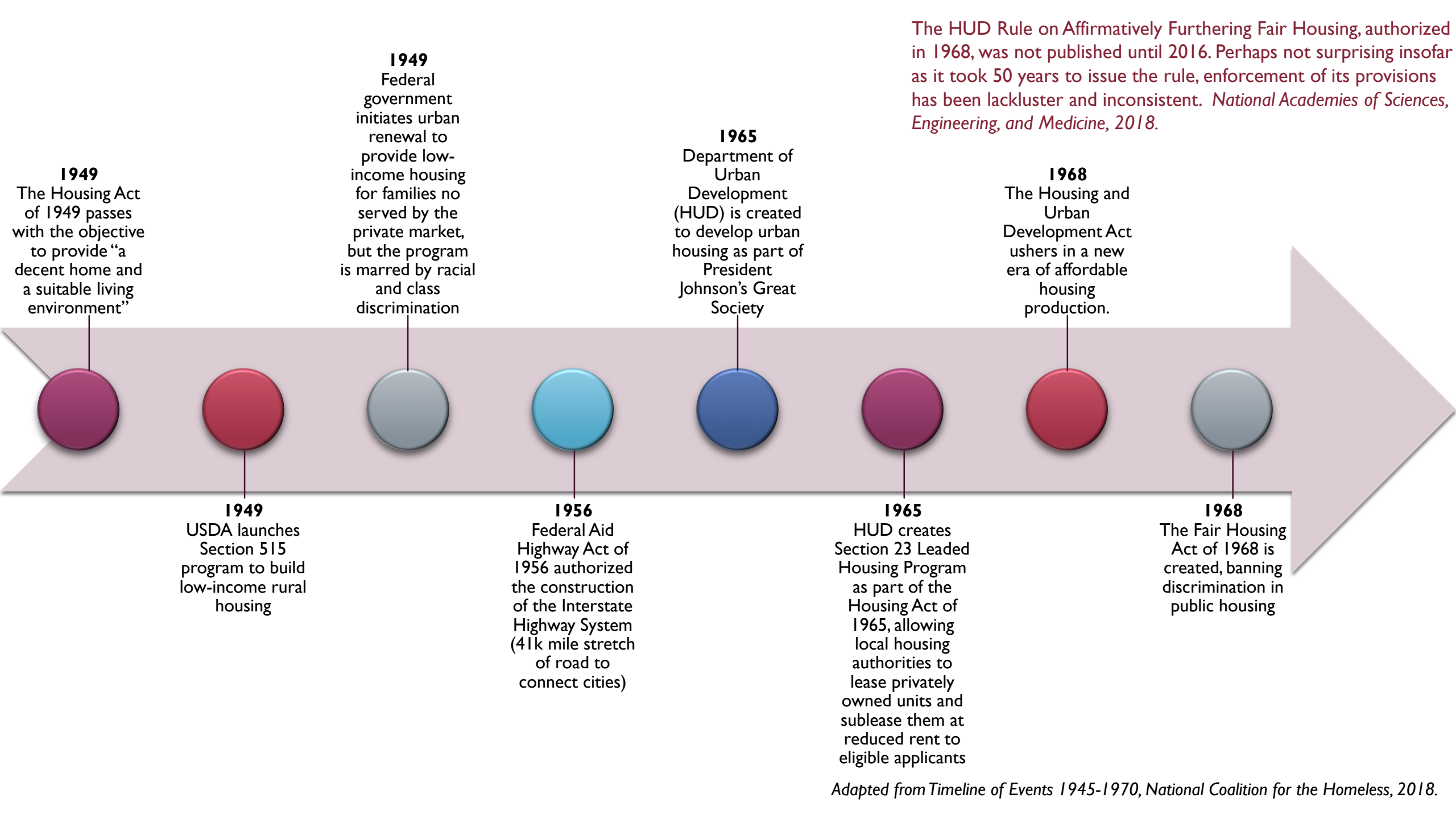
The Scream

-Edvard Munch, 1893



UNPACKING (SOME OF) THE HISTORY OF HOMELESSNESS





1973

Nixon places a moratorium on all subsidized affordable housing production. Congress ends this moratorium 8 months later

1976

HUD subsidizes the construction of 203,046 new housing units; HUD Budget Authority \$57.7B, home ownership \$33.2B. Homelessness is not yet a system problem

1983

The Housing & Urban Renewal Recovery Act enacted rental rehabilitation programs and limited Section 8 benefits

1990

The National Affordable Housing Act renewed homeownership & subsidized housing

1974

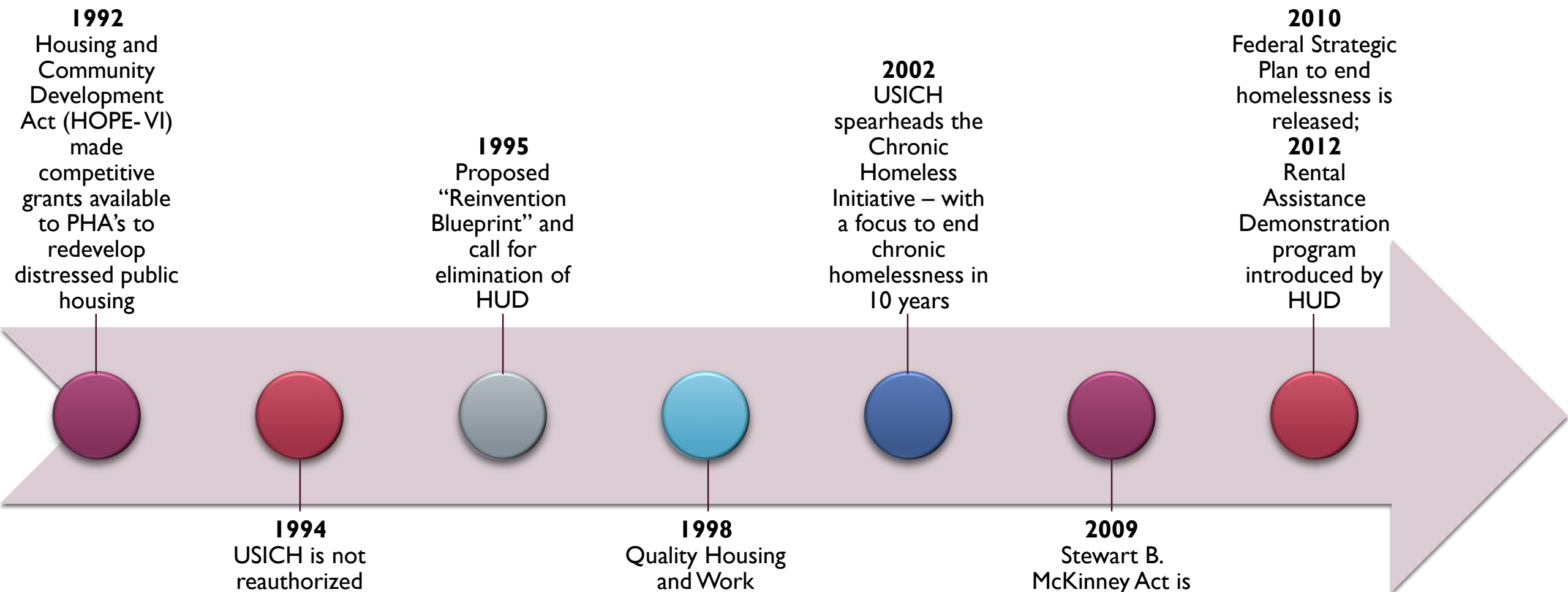
Housing and Urban Development Act of 1974 merged several urban development programs. HUD Section 8 program replaces Section 23, making federal move towards demand-side rental subsidies

1981

The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 made several changes to public housing

1987

Stewart B. McKinney Act – 1st Federal Legislation enacted to address homelessness; Shelter, Healthcare for the Homeless, Creation of USICH, defining homelessness



1992
Housing and Community Development Act (HOPE-VI) made competitive grants available to PHA's to redevelop distressed public housing

1995
Proposed "Reinvention Blueprint" and call for elimination of HUD

2002
USICH spearheads the Chronic Homeless Initiative – with a focus to end chronic homelessness in 10 years

2010
Federal Strategic Plan to end homelessness is released;
2012
Rental Assistance Demonstration program introduced by HUD

1994
USICH is not reauthorized (and isn't reinstated until 2001)

1998
Quality Housing and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Program of 1998

2009
Stewart B. McKinney Act is reauthorized consolidating several programs and providing new definitions

Congress had not provided funding for the development of new housing since FY1994, the provision of QHWOA effectively prohibited any net new development, even if funds were available.

McCarty, Introduction to Public Housing, 2014

INFLUENCES WHICH LEAD TO POVERTY, HOUSING INSECURITY, AND OTHER COMMUNITY DISPARITIES

INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIORS AND CIRCUMSTANCES	COMMUNITY CONDITIONS	EXPLOITATION	POLITICAL/ECONOMIC STRUCTURES
<p><i>Definition:</i> Research on the choices, behaviors, and circumstances of people in poverty</p>	<p><i>Definition:</i> Research on resources and human and social capital in the city or county</p>	<p><i>Definition:</i> Research on the impact of exploitation on individuals and communities</p>	<p><i>Definition:</i> Research on political, economic, and social policies and systems at the organizational, city/county, state, national, and international levels</p>
<p><i>Sample topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Racism ~ Discrimination by age, gender, disability, race, sexual identity ~ Bad loans ~ Credit card debt ~ Lack of savings ~ Skill sets ~ Dropping out ~ Lack of education ~ Alcoholism ~ Job loss ~ Teen pregnancies ~ Early language experience ~ Street crime ~ Dependency ~ Work ethic ~ Lack of organizational skills 	<p><i>Sample topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Racism ~ Discrimination by age, gender, disability, race, sexual identity ~ Layoffs ~ Middle class flight ~ Plant closings ~ Underfunded schools ~ Weak safety net ~ Criminalizing poverty ~ Charity that leads to dependency ~ Lack of access to affordable housing ~ City and regional planning ~ Mix of employment/wage opportunities ~ Loss of access to high-quality schools, childcare, and preschool ~ Downward pressure on wages 	<p><i>Sample topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Racism ~ Discrimination by age, gender, disability, race, sexual identity ~ Payday lenders ~ Lease/purchase outlets ~ Subprime mortgages ~ Sweatshops ~ Human trafficking ~ Employment and labor law violations ~ Wage and benefits theft ~ Some landlords ~ Sex trade ~ Internet scams ~ Drug trade ~ Poverty premium (the poor pay more for goods and services) ~ Day labor 	<p><i>Sample topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Racism ~ Discrimination by age, gender, disability, race, sexual identity ~ Return on political investment (ROPI) ~ Bursting “bubbles” ~ Free trade agreements ~ Lack of wealth-creating mechanisms ~ Stagnant wages ~ Insecure pensions ~ Deindustrialization ~ Increased productivity ~ Minimum wage, living wage, self-sufficient wage ~ Globalization ~ Declining middle class ~ Decline in unions ~ Taxation patterns

“DIRTY” MATH – CHALLENGING MYTHS


- **“Dirty” Math’s Two Major Assumptions:**
 - 100% of population will have the condition being considered
 - 582,000 on Point-In-Time (Average LOT = 77 days, $365/77 = 4.74 * 582k = 2,758,680$) – So we’re using 3,000,000 people
- SUD: 21,200,000 (Association of American Medical Colleges) - 85.9% of persons struggling with addiction do not experience homelessness
- BH: 57,800,000 (National Institutes of Health) – 94.8% of persons navigating mental health concerns do not experience homelessness
- Poverty: 37,200,000 (US Census Bureau) – 91.9% of persons struggling financially do not experience homelessness

WHAT DOES THE HOMELESS POPULATION LOOK LIKE?

- SUD: 38% struggle with alcoholism / 34% struggles with substance use
- BH: 26.2% diagnosed with mental illness
- Poverty: 25% meet extremely low income thresholds
- Gender: 61% Male
- Race/Ethnicity: Black 37.3%; Hispanic 24.1%
- Age/Youth: 5% under Age 24
- Families with Children: 27.7%

DOES THIS LOOK LIKE OUR RURAL COMMUNITY?





Rural Homelessness (much like Urban Homelessness) is fundamentally due to the interaction of structural and personal factors.

-Larry Patton, *Homelessness, Health, and Human Needs*

WHAT MAKES RURAL HOMELESSNESS UNIQUE?

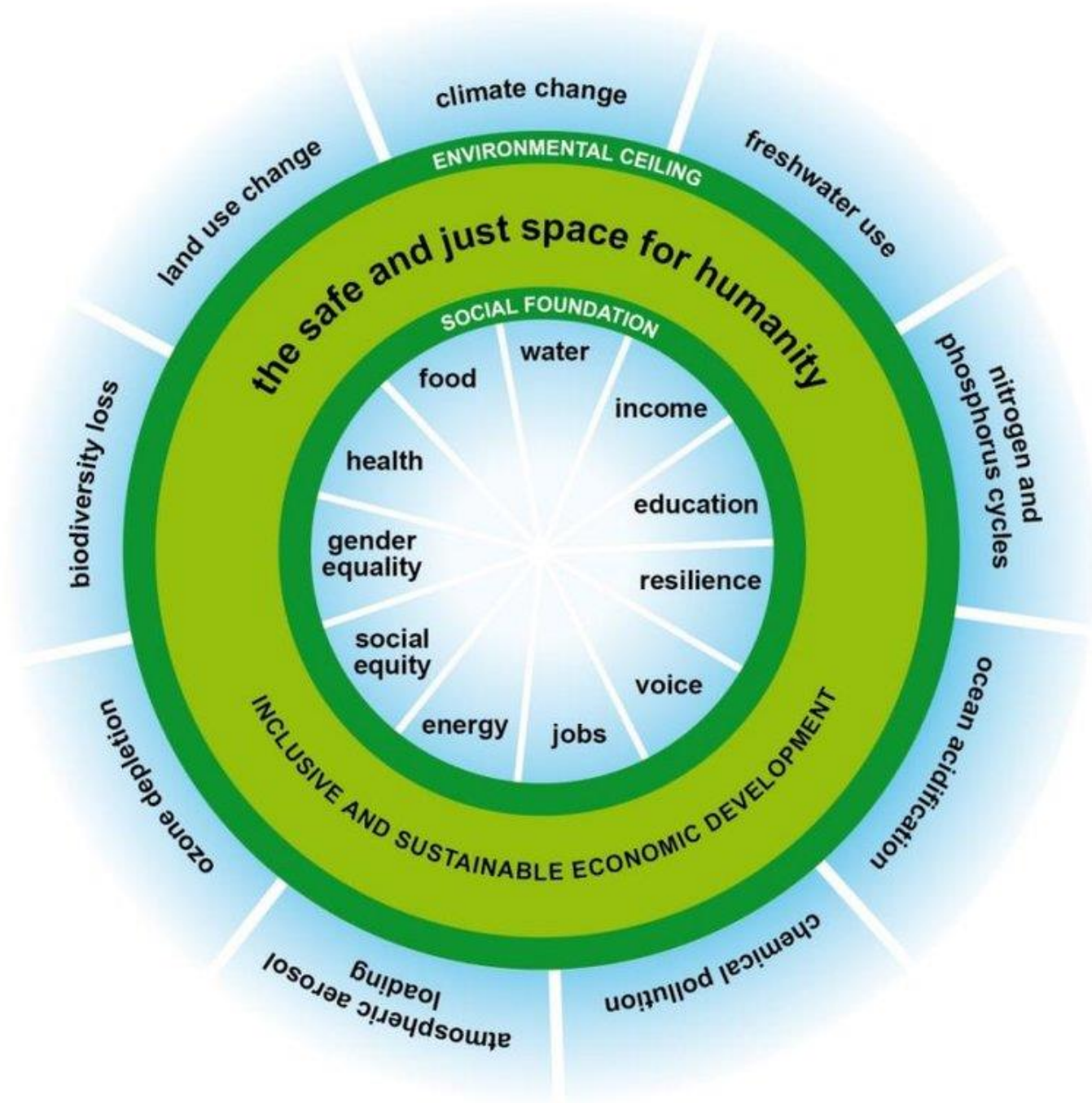


VS



CONTRIBUTING FACTORS







BEST PRACTICES AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

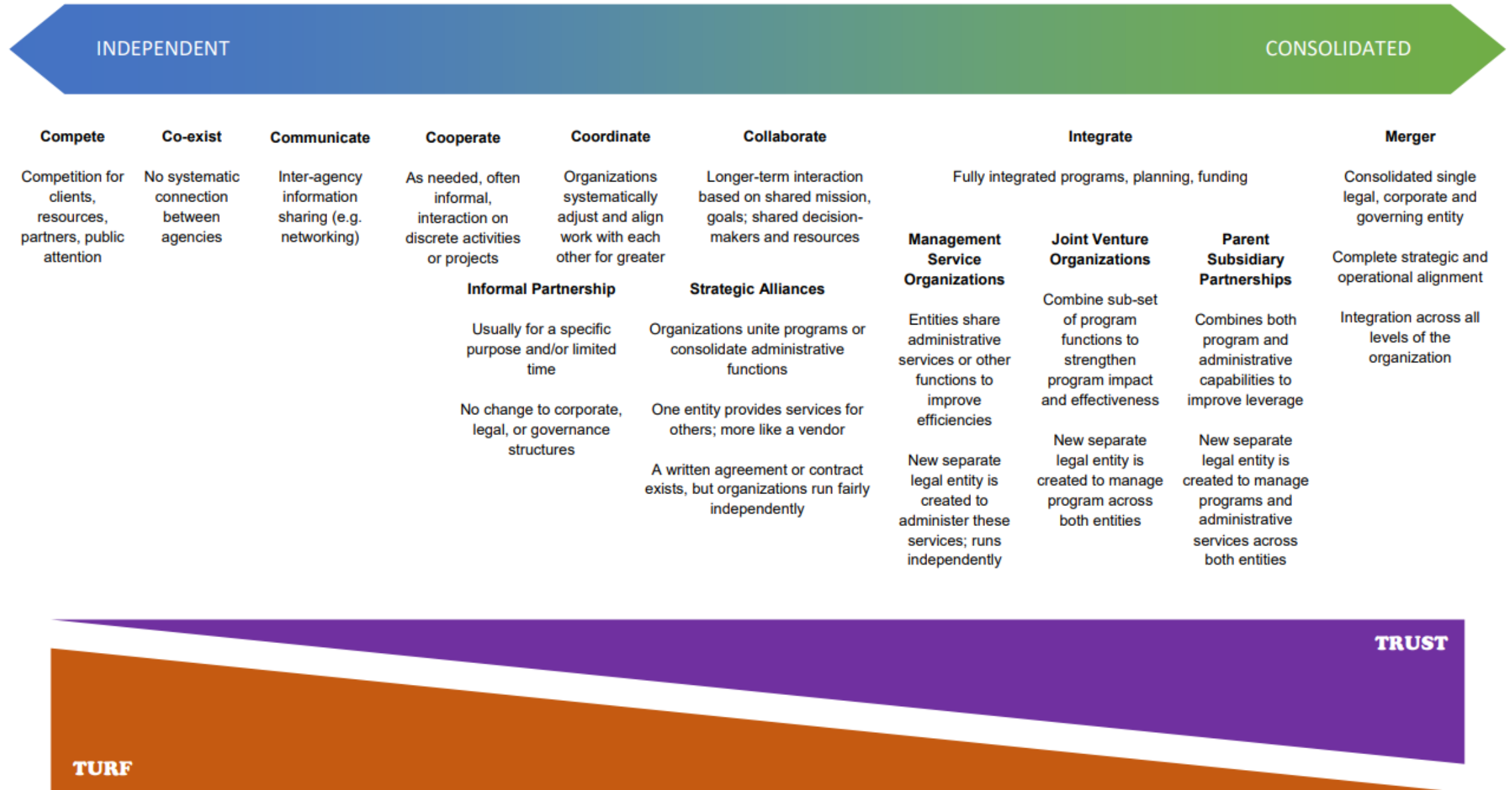


BEST PRACTICES

- Housing First
- Supportive Services
- Technology
- Trauma-Informed Approaches
- Grassroots Initiatives
- Community Engagement, Collaboration, and Partnership



COLLABORATION SPECTRUM



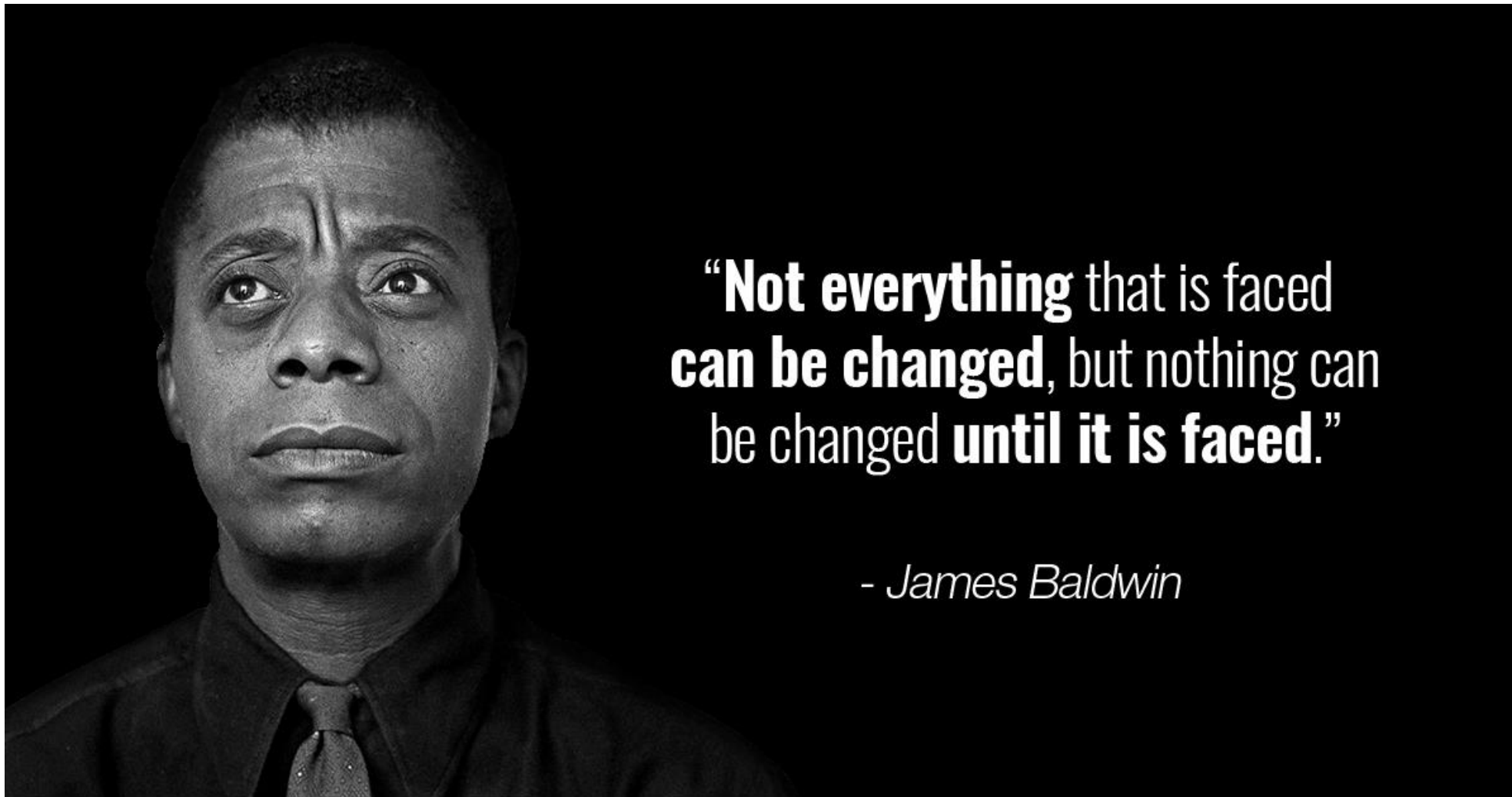
"One piece of log creates a small fire, adequate to warm you up. Add just a few more pieces to blast an immense bonfire, large enough to warm up your entire circle of friends; needless to say individuality counts but teamwork dynamites." - Jin Kwon

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

- Cross-systems Collaboration
- Integrated Services/Coordinated, No-wrong Door Strategies
- Intentional and Regular Outreach
- Eviction Prevention
- Shared Housing
- Homeownership Pathways
- Transition-in-Place Models
- Creating/Growing Funding Models that Support Direct Client Need



ADVOCACY



“Not everything that is faced
can be changed, but nothing can
be changed **until it is faced.**”

- James Baldwin

IMPORTANCE OF ADVOCACY AT THE POLICY LEVEL

HUD: \$20 Billion to end homelessness

- Mortgage Interest Deduction: \$25.5 Billion
 - Before tax reform in 2017, the cost of MID was approximately \$70 billion per year.

What about PA?

- Homestead Exclusion + Property Tax/Rent Rebate: \$864 Million

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT



But even with the inspiration of others, it's understandable that we sometimes think the world's problems are so big that we can do little to help. On our own, we cannot end wars or wipe out injustice, but the cumulative impact of thousands of small acts of goodness can be bigger than we imagine. - Queen Elizabeth II



THANK YOU

Any Question

Do you have any questions or comments for me before we conclude?

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