Using data to prevent homelessness

Preventing homelessness – lessons from the Nordic countries

Monday 6th of May, 2024

Intro

Taylor Grills

Systems Improvement Advisor,
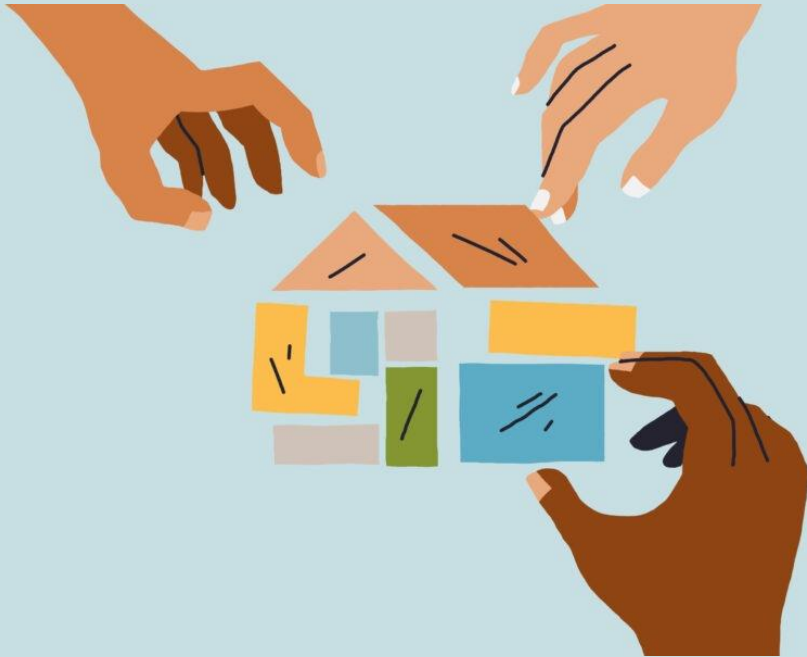International

COMMUNITY
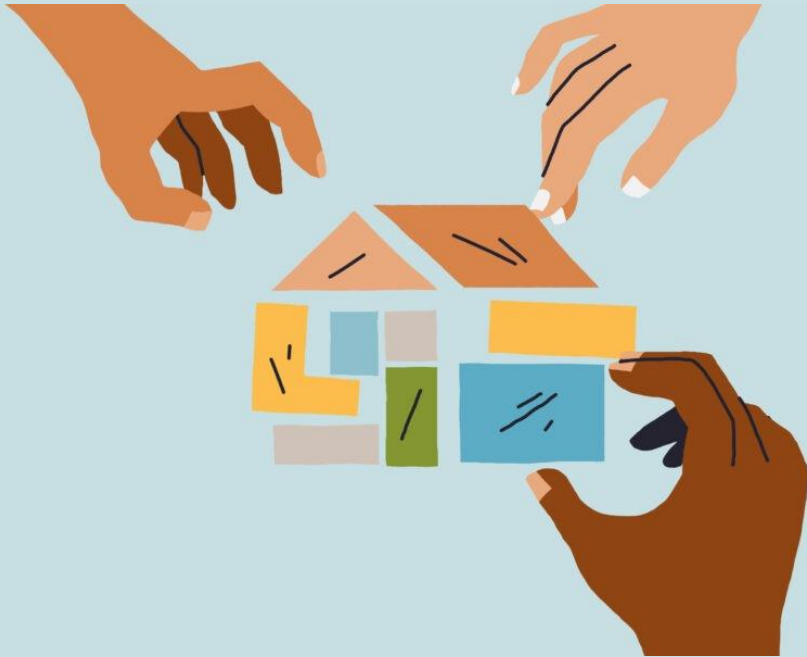SOLUTIONS

Louise Marie Pedersen

Founder & Director

hjemløsninger

Our Mission

We work for
a lasting **end
to homelessness**
that leaves
no one behind.

Our Approach

We partner with communities to solve homelessness. We use **creative data and problem-solving strategies** to help local teams do three things:

1. Get people out of homelessness more quickly.

2. Identify and turn off the sources of new inflow.

3. Use data for advocacy to develop housing supply & supports communities need to end homelessness.

Our Story

1990

Rosanne Haggerty founds **Common Ground Community.*** Over the next 20 years, the organization creates nearly 3,000 more homes, assisting more than 4,500 people. But despite the success of these buildings in ending homelessness for their residents, **overall homelessness continued to rise** in New York City.

2003

The group that would become the Community Solutions team launches the **Street to Home Initiative** in NYC, rallying organizations to reduce street homelessness in the 20-block Times Square area by 87% in two years.

2010

The **100,000 Homes Campaign,** (2010-2014) was launched to help U.S. communities find homes for 100,000 of the most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness. **186 communities helped 105,580 Americans find housing.** Yet, at the Campaign's end, no community has ended homelessness.

2014

Creation of **Community Solutions,** that asks a new question: what does it take to count down to zero people experiencing homelessness?

Community Solutions is not affiliated with Common Ground, which now operates under the name "Breaking Ground."

2015–now

Launch of **Built for Zero**, that have been proving communities can end homelessness and reach functional zero.
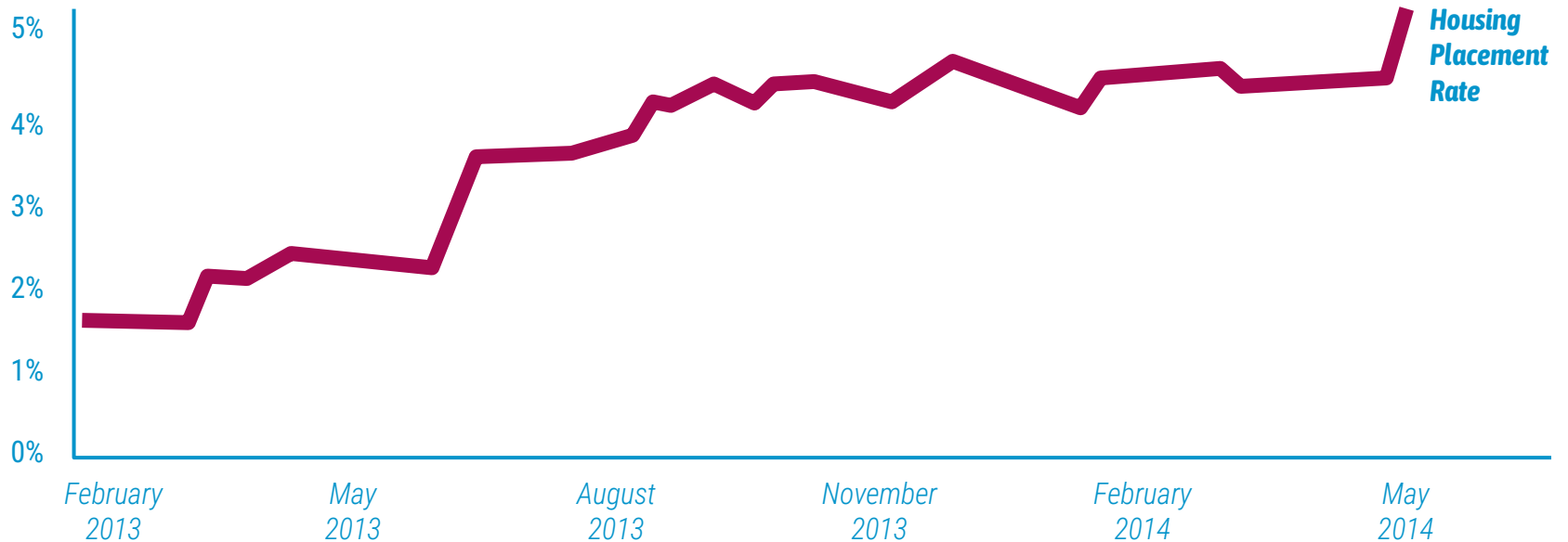
14 communities have reached this milestone!

We are now working to **create a tipping point for ending homelessness in the U.S.**
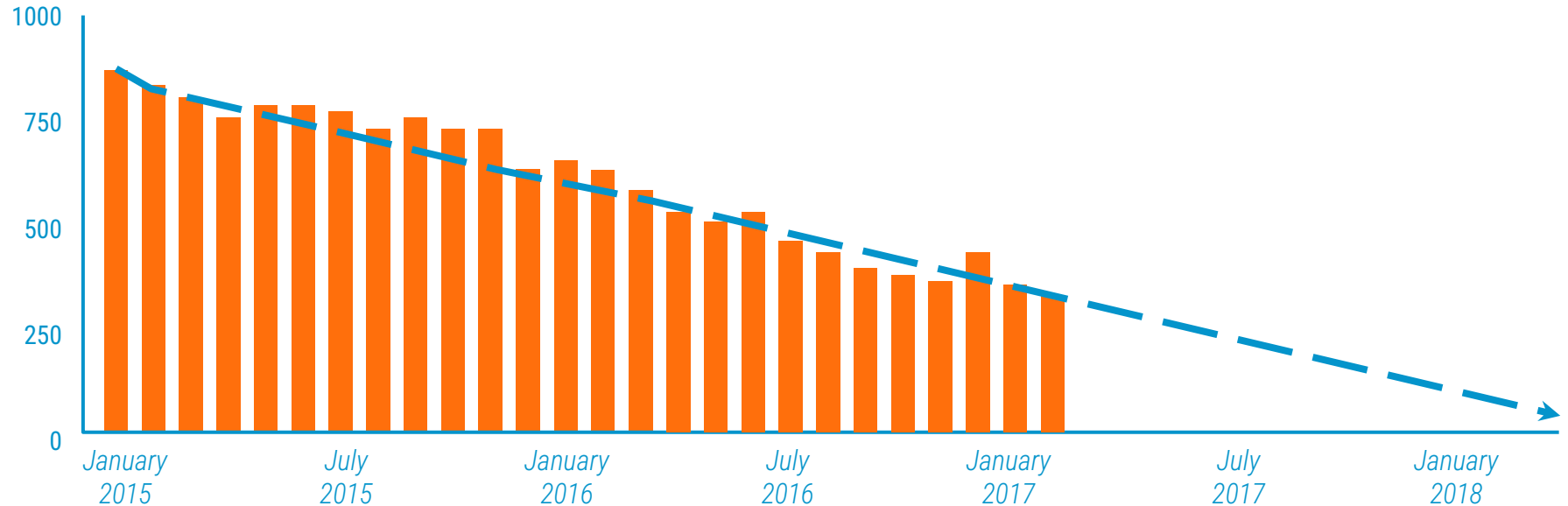
COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Key Lesson

The **100,000 Homes Campaign** proved that communities could increase their housing placement rates, but this did not automatically reduce homelessness.

Key Lesson: Start Counting Down

Built for Zero is designed to help communities **count down to zero** —
Homelessness is a complex challenge that requires a clearly defined end state for communities to shoot for.

Our Story

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Number of Global Communities

An international movement of more than **180 global communities** working to measurably **end homelessness** one population at a time.

Number of Global Communities

180 global communities

United States: 105
Canada: 42
Australia: 22
France: 7
UK: 3
Denmark: 1

Reaching Functional Zero

Achieved!

United States: 14 communities

2 have solved for both chronic & veterans

Canada: 5 communities

In the Home Stretch!

Australia: 3

Canada: 5

United States: 13

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

What do communities need to reach zero?

Continuous improvement approach

Shared, Measurable Aim

Nimble, integrated team

Real-time, by-name feedback loop

Flexible arsenal of resources

Testable improvement strategies

UNITY SOLUTIONS

What do communities need to reach zero?

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UNITY SOLUTIONS

What is real time data?

By Name List (BNL) Data

is a **real-time, person-specific** list of everyone experiencing homelessness — which provides communities with a full and up-to-date view of homelessness.

You know each person by name, their homeless history, and what their needs are.

What is real time data?

By Name List (BNL) Data

By maintaining the list, communities track the ever changing composition of their homelessness population.

The list is used to **track progress towards functional zero** and to test interventions for improvement to end homelessness

What is real time data?

By Name List (BNL) Data

It is **comprehensive, reliable, & population-level** data that is updated regularly. It helps communities answer important questions like:

How many people became homeless for the first time this month?

How many were people returning to homelessness?

How many people exited from homelessness?

Are the experiences of people moving through the system
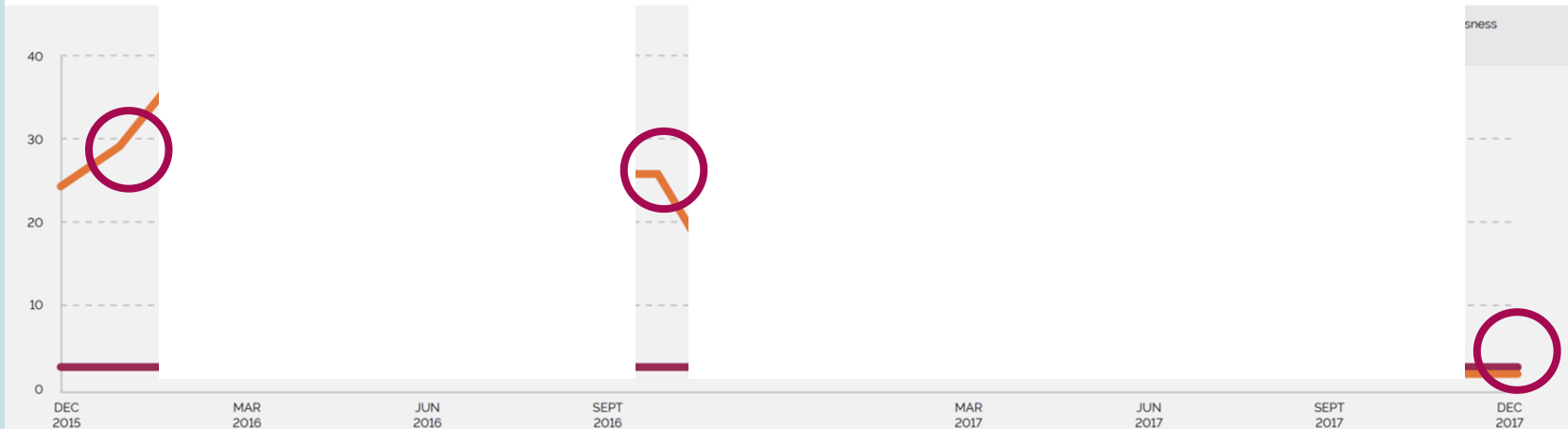
How does BNL data differ from PIT?

Point In Time (PIT) Count

An annually completed snapshot of homelessness meant to serve as the overall scope of homelessness in a community, region, or country.

used as a check in for our BNL data numbers

How does BNL data differ from PIT?

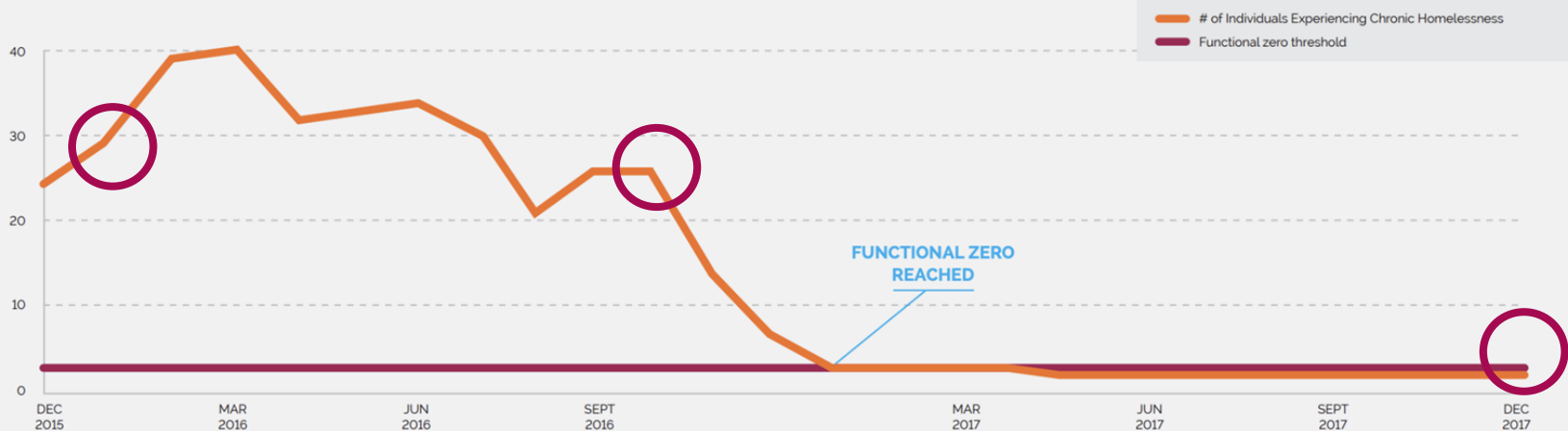CASE STUDY

Rockford, IL:
Reducing chronic homelessness

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

How does BNL data differ from PIT?

CASE STUDY

Rockford, IL:
Reducing chronic homelessness

RESULT: Reduced chronic homelessness to functional zero over a period of 12 months

— # of Individuals Experiencing Chronic Homelessness
— Functional zero threshold

FUNCTIONAL ZERO
REACHED

40

30

20

10

0

DEC 2015   MAR 2016   JUN 2016   SEPT 2016   MAR 2017   JUN 2017   SEPT 2017   DEC 2017

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How does BNL data differ from PIT?

	By Name List Data	Point in Time Count
Collected	Overtime & continuously updated	One time
Updated	At least monthly	annually
Data is	Person-specific; can be anonymized	Aggregate & anonymized
How it is used	In-depth use of data to understand needs of individuals & advocate for specific housing & supports	Gets the community together & used as a number to advocate

Defining a By Name List

FULL COVERAGE

- All agencies and programs are represented
- List includes people sleeping in shelters and on the streets

PERSON-LEVEL DATA

- Each person has an entry that includes their name, history, health and housing needs
- Each person can be followed through the system

REGULAR UPDATES

- List is updated monthly, at a minimum
- As people's housing status changes, so do their list entries

RELIABILITY

- Data balances month over month, just like your checkbook

Collect 7 Key Data Points
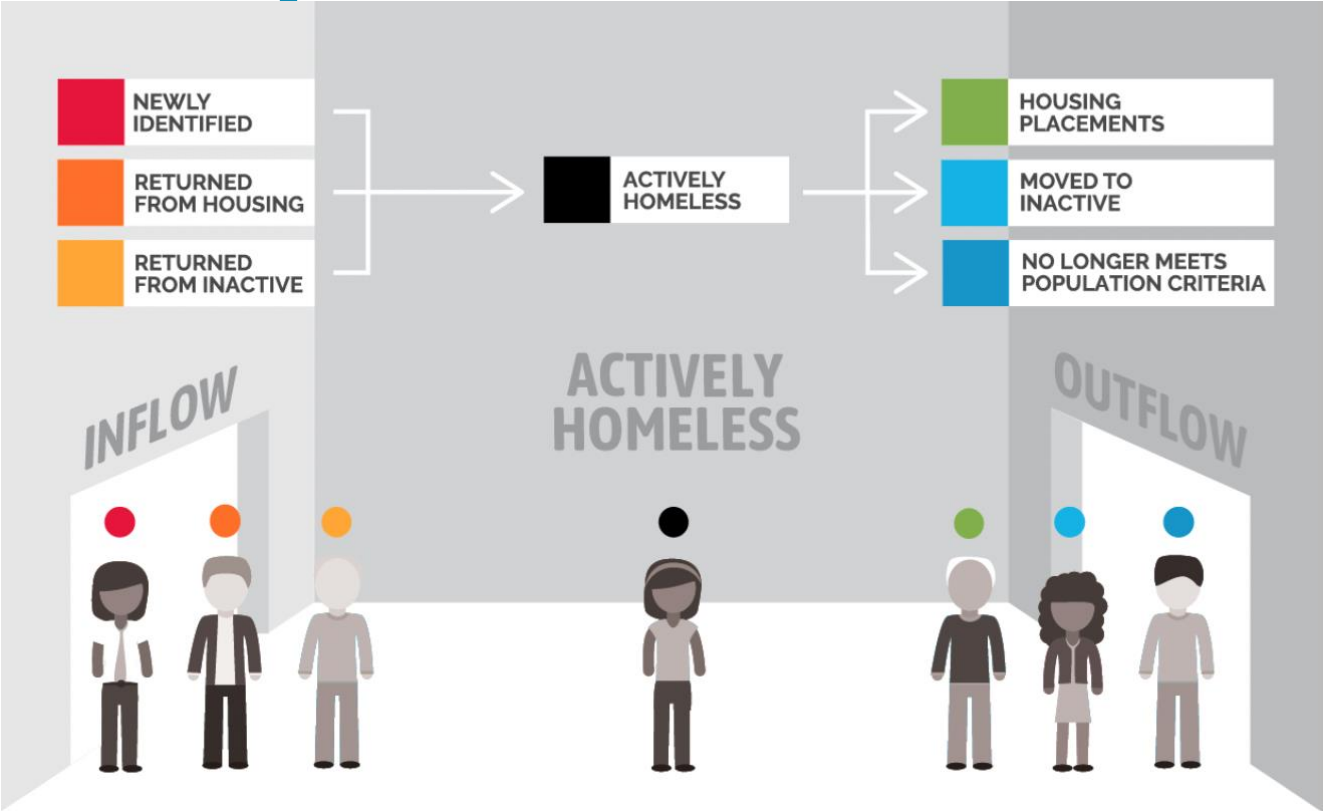
Other Data Points to track

DEMOGRAPHICS → AGE, GENDER, RACE/ETHNICITY

STATUS → ACTIVE, INACTIVE, HOUSE
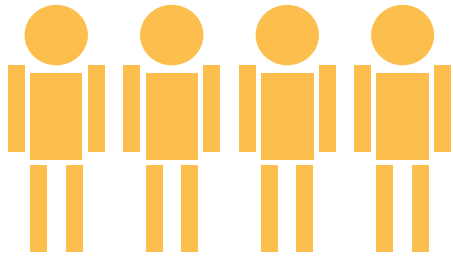
POPULATIONS → SINGLE ADULTS, YOUTH, FAMILIES

SUBPOPULATIONS → CHRONIC ROUGH SLEEPERS, VETERANS, OVER 55s

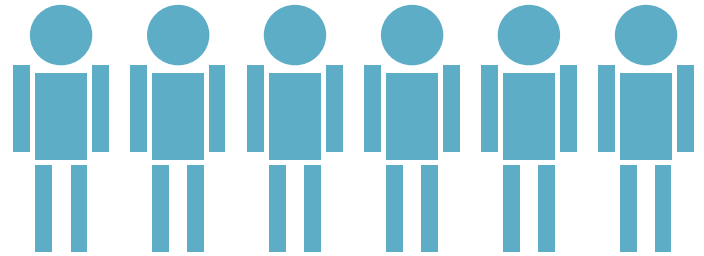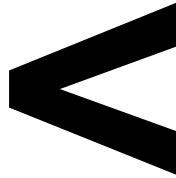**LENGTHS OF TIME** → INTO HOUSE, MOVING BETWEEN "HOUSING STAGES"

Tracking Data towards Functional Zero

NEWLY IDENTIFIED
RETURNED FROM HOUSING
RETURNED FROM INACTIVE

ACTIVELY HOMELESS

HOUSING PLACEMENTS
MOVED TO INACTIVE
NO LONGER MEETS POPULATION CRITERIA

INFLOW

ACTIVELY HOMELESS

OUTFLOW

Actively Homeless

<

6-Mth Avg. Housing Placement Rate

Functional Zero

Actively Homeless **<** 6-Mth Avg. Housing Placement Rate

OR 3 *(whichever is greater)*

*Sustain this for at least three months.

Functional Zero

DOES NOT MEAN: nobody is experiencing homelessness, or that no one will experience homelessness.

DOES MEAN

A community has been driving that number to zero, and is keeping it below the community's capacity to ensure positive exits from homelessness.

Why is BNL data important?

Using BNL data allows communities to serve individuals by providing **tailored solutions to fit their individual needs,** understand the broader patterns of homelessness in their area, and more **effectively allocate resources** and efforts toward ending homelessness locally.

Why is BNL data important?

Individual Level Impacts

- Leaves no-one behind.

- Creates a shared understanding of an individual's experience of homelessness

- This shifts to a mindset of "OUR" community client, rather than a single organisation's client

- It helps the individual access all the needed supports to end their experience of homelessness

Why is BNL data important?

System Level Impacts

- Single space for all agencies & programs to share data

- It is a critical element of a homelessness response system - because you learn HOW and WHERE to improve!

- It is a tool to track:
  1. What you population looks like;
  2. How you are progressing towards functional zero to end homelessness

The approach enters DK

Why do people experience homelessness in Denmark?

How can we create a reality where homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring in Denmark?

How can we fix a problem we cannot see?

hjemløsninger

The approach enters DK
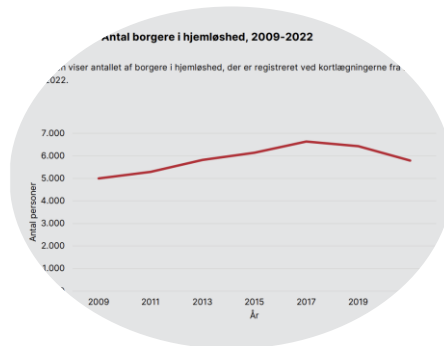
Why do people experience homelessness in Denmark?

Because our systems are not designed to end homelessness
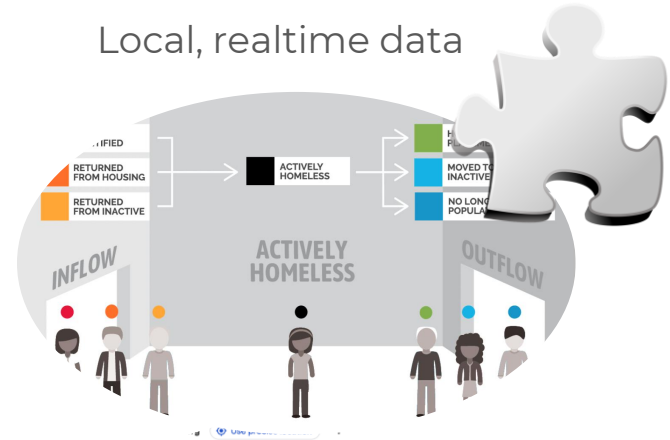
The approach enters DK

How can we fix a problem we cannot see?
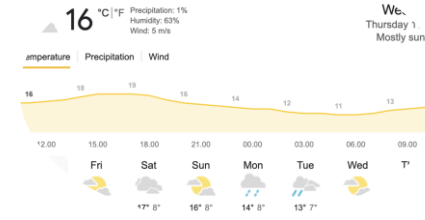
We can't - we need real time data to see the problem

National PIT-counts
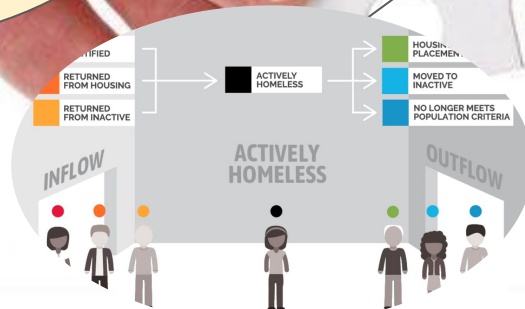

+

Local, realtime data

The approach enters DK

How can we create a reality where homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring in Denmark?

Our mission

We work for a **lasting end** to homelessness for all in Denmark - starting at a municipal, local level

Our overall goal

Prove that homelessness is solvable in local areas and **scale** the efforts across the country

Our overall goal

Prove that homelessness is solvable in local areas and **scale** the efforts across the country...to all 98 municipalities...

Getting started

Our specific aim

By August 1st, 2025, one Danish municipality will have measurably ended homelessness for a specific population by reaching functional zero - and two municipalities are beginning their work towards zero.

Our specific aim

Specific population in Kolding:
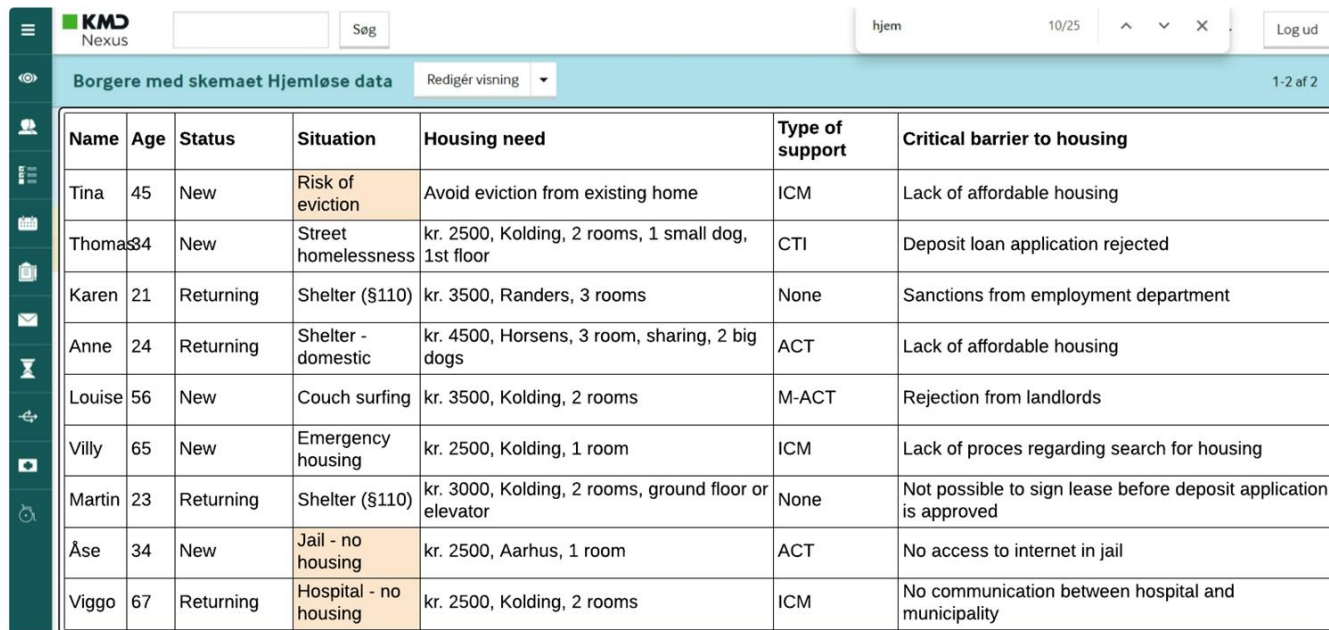
People above the age of 30, experiencing homelessness

Homelessness situation ▼
§110 - Shelters
§109 – Shelters - domestic violence
Couch surfing
Rough sleeping
Night shelters/Drop-In emergency overnight accommodation
Correctional Facilities
Transitional housing (w/o permanent contract)
Hotel/Hostel
Hospitals (Somatic/Psychiatric) or other treatment facility
Emergency housing (e.g. camper, boat, allotment garden, etc.)
At risk of homelessness

Real time data in a danish municipal context
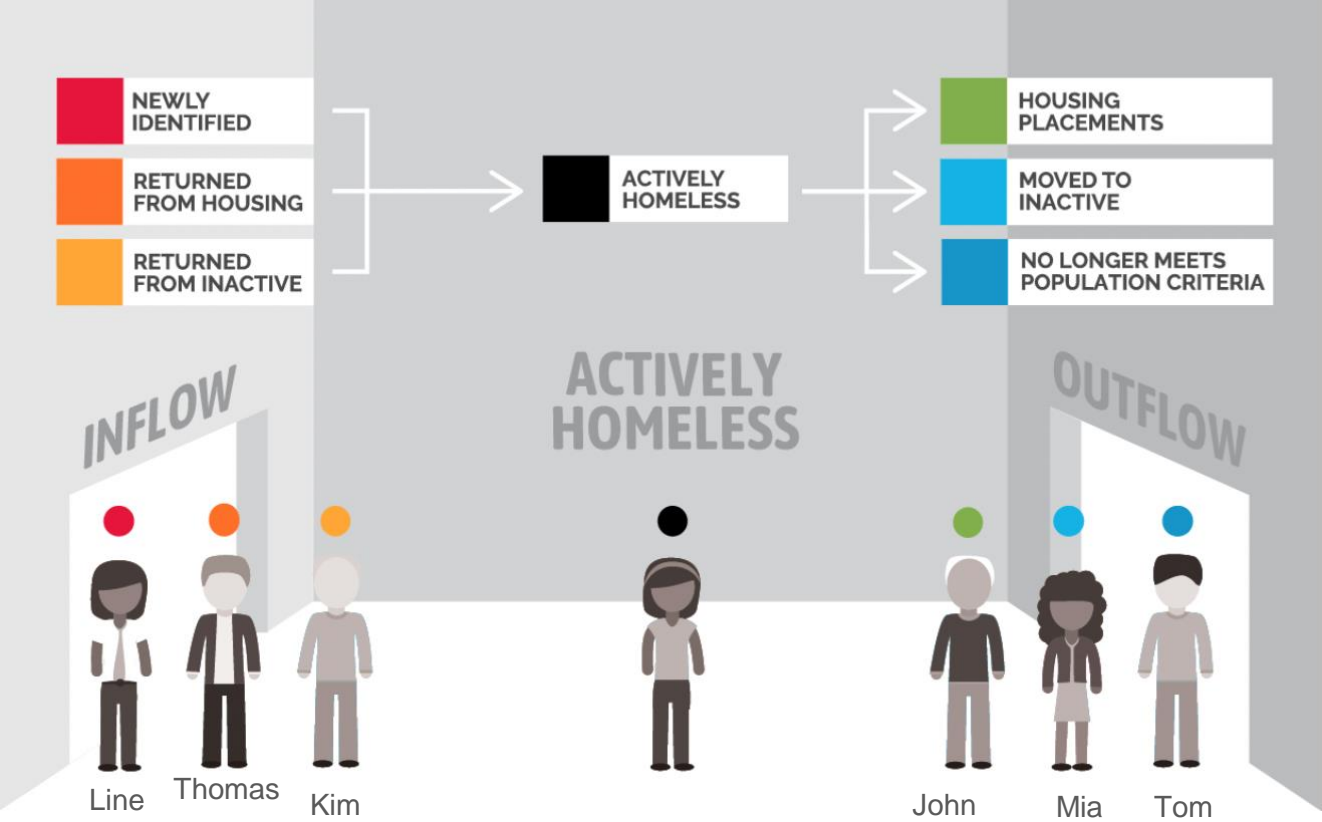
Real time data in a danish municipal context

A realtime by-name list in an internal municipal IT system

Borgere med skemaet Hjemløse data — Redigér visning — 1-2 af 2

Name	Age	Status	Situation	Housing need	Type of support	Critical barrier to housing
Tina	45	New	Risk of eviction	Avoid eviction from existing home	ICM	Lack of affordable housing
Thomas	34	New	Street homelessness	kr. 2500, Kolding, 2 rooms, 1 small dog, 1st floor	CTI	Deposit loan application rejected
Karen	21	Returning	Shelter (§110)	kr. 3500, Randers, 3 rooms	None	Sanctions from employment department
Anne	24	Returning	Shelter - domestic	kr. 4500, Horsens, 3 room, sharing, 2 big dogs	ACT	Lack of affordable housing
Louise	56	New	Couch surfing	kr. 3500, Kolding, 2 rooms	M-ACT	Rejection from landlords
Villy	65	New	Emergency housing	kr. 2500, Kolding, 1 room	ICM	Lack of proces regarding search for housing
Martin	23	Returning	Shelter (§110)	kr. 3000, Kolding, 2 rooms, ground floor or elevator	None	Not possible to sign lease before deposit application is approved
Åse	34	New	Jail - no housing	kr. 2500, Aarhus, 1 room	ACT	No access to internet in jail
Viggo	67	Returning	Hospital - no housing	kr. 2500, Kolding, 2 rooms	ICM	No communication between hospital and municipality

hjemløsninger

Real time data in a danish municipal context

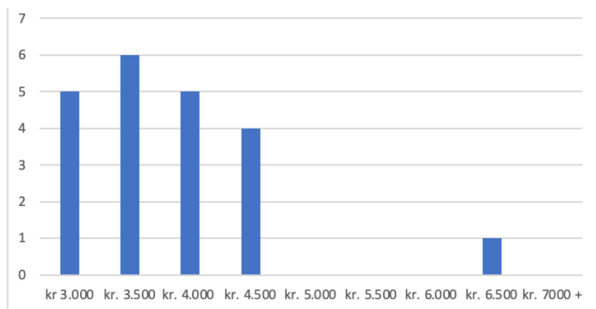A dashboard in an internal municipal IT system with aggregate data based on realtime by-name list
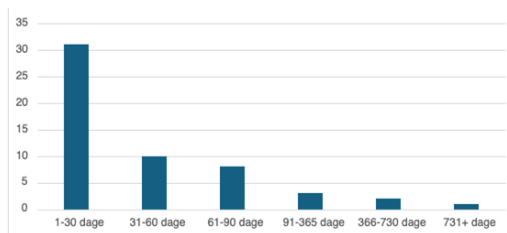
TARGIT

Inflow + outflow this month
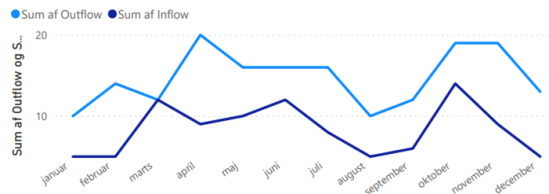
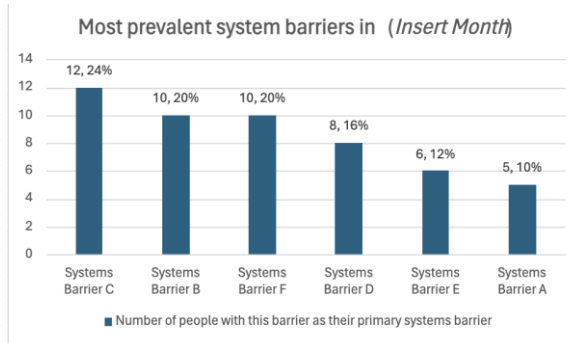Total # of people experiencing homelessness per month

Housing needs this month

# of days in homelessness

hjemløsninger

Most prevalent system barriers

Most prevalent system barriers in (*Insert Month*)

- 12, 24% — Systems Barrier C
- 10, 20% — Systems Barrier B
- 10, 20% — Systems Barrier F
- 8, 16% — Systems Barrier D
- 6, 12% — Systems Barrier E
- 5, 10% — Systems Barrier A

■ Number of people with this barrier as their primary systems barrier

- The cost of joining a housing association is not covered by the municipality, and citizens are unwilling to spend money on it.
- People in shelter who cannot get a deposit-loan
- Lengthy processes with banks - apprartment goes to other person
- Landlords reject citizens (from shelters, have a foreign name, not allowed to enter a ghetto area, have a criminal record.
- Difficult to find housing for citizens with dog(s).
- Waiting time for deposit loans causes the property to be taken by someone else.
- Inter-municipal disputes.
- Citizens become lonely in their apartments - it never becomes a home
- Not possible to look for a home while in jail (no internet)
- Not possible to get an ID - Id needed to sign a lease
- ....and so on and so on...!

Using real time data to prevent homelessness

Aim: What are we trying to accomplish?

How will we know a change is an improvement?

What change can we make that will result in improvement?

PLAN

DO

ACT

STUDY

Reach FZ for people above the age of 30, experiencing homelessness on August 1st 2025

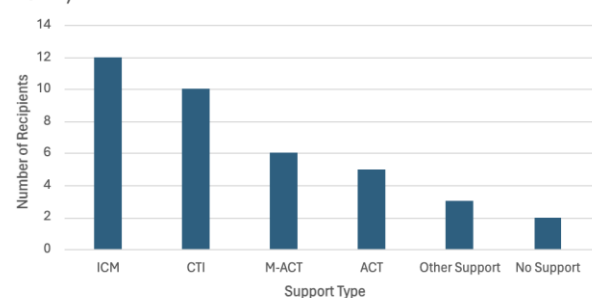Look at real time data before and after improving the system

Focus 1: Using data to prevent people from returning to homelessness
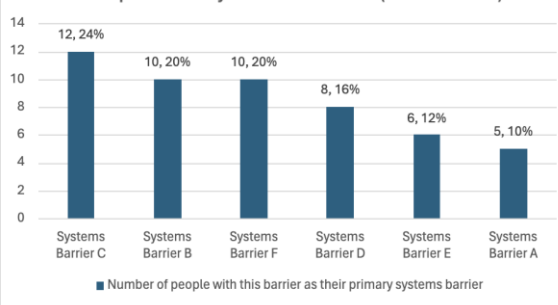
# of people returning from housing this month

Inflow in Kolding Municipality in (*Insert Month*)

Provision of support in Kolding Municipality in (*Insert Month*)

Most prevalent system barriers in (*Insert Month*)

1. **Look at data**
2. **Ask questions**
3. **Improve the system**
4. **Look at data again**
5. **Implement or try something new**

- Loneliness?
- Didn't feel like home?
- How many evictions? Because of what? How many? 1st, 2nd, 3rd time the person was evicted?
- Support type that didn't match?

Focus 2: Using data to ensure that homelessness is a brief experience

When homelessness is a brief experience, we are preventing

- Development or escalation of mental illness and/or substance abuse
- Premature death
- Further traumatic experiences
- Marginalization

Focus 2: Using data to ensure that homelessness is a brief experience

Housing needs this month
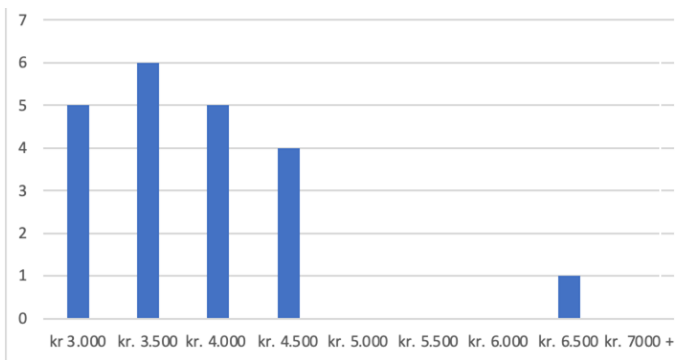
- "Regular" homes?
- "Quirky" homes?
- Transitional housing
- Especially affordable housing
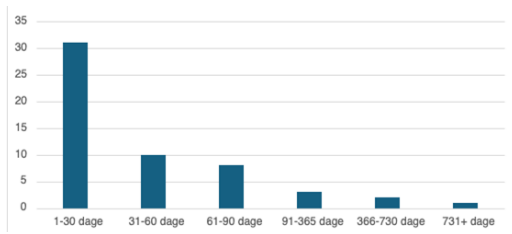- Housing social communities
- Starter homes

1. **Look at data**
2. **Ask questions**
3. **Improve the system**
4. **Look at data again**
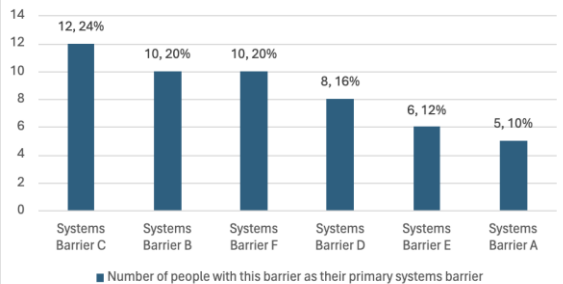5. **Implement or try something new**
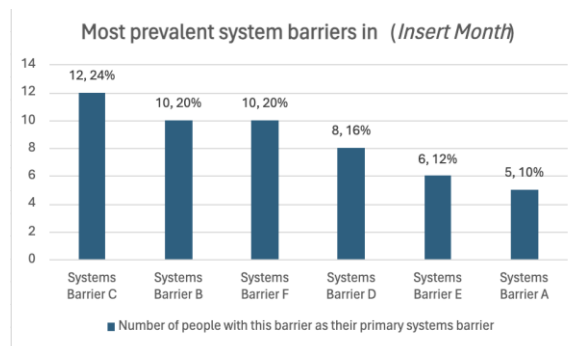
Housing supply doesn't correspond with housing demand?

Focus 2: Using data to ensure that homelessness is a brief experience

of days in homelessness

Most prevalent system barriers in *(Insert Month)*

Can't get a lease b/c they don't have an ID?

Waiting time for deposit loan - apartment to someone else?

1. **Look at data**
2. **Ask questions**
3. **Improve the system**
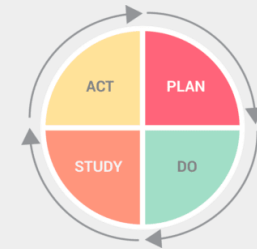4. **Look at data again**
5. **Implement or try something new**

Focus 3: Using data to prevent inflow

1. **Look at data**
2. **Ask questions**
3. **Improve the system**
4. **Look at data again**
5. **Implement or try something new**
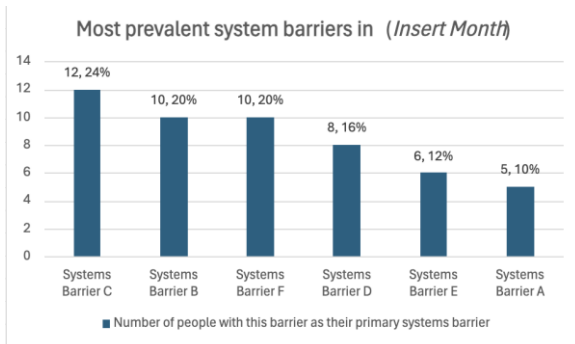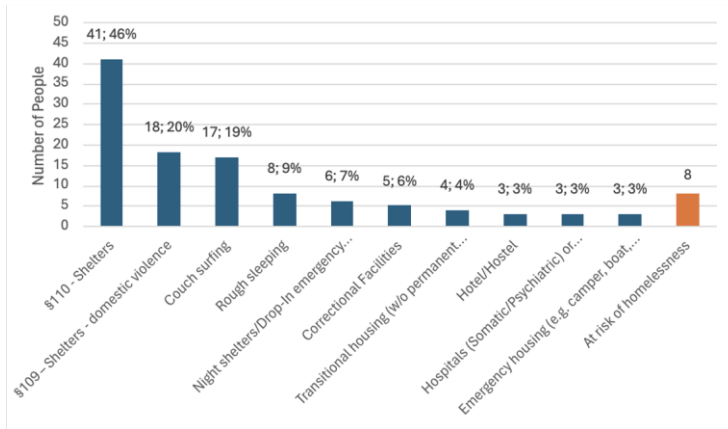
From jail to shelter (no internet)?

From psychiatric hospital to the street (no collaboration?)?

Wait...what about GDPR and Housing First?

GDPR	Housing First
The municipality has the authority to collect this data as it is part of the municipal task	Data can support the Housing First approach - for example:
All personally sensitive data is stored in an internal municipal system that can only be accessed by employees directly working with citizens	- ensure that everyone experiencing homelessness receives a Housing First intervention - track the time it takes from entering to exiting homelessness - measure whether people who receive a Housing First intervention remain in their housing.
It is possible to create an anonymous casefile	

In short:

Data and a system level approach is key if we want to prevent and end homelessness for all

Questions?
Thoughts?
Ideas?