

Homelessness in the US: a reading list for economists

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June 2023

This reading list is intended to provide a quick start for PhD students and faculty in economics who are interested in the issue of homelessness in the United States. It is skewed towards more recent writings by economists, and is not intended to serve as a complete overview of the literature. This list served as the basis for a spring 2023 reading group for PhD students in economics at Harvard, and we are grateful to the other participants,² whose comments in the reading group meetings helped shape the current version.

Topic 1: Background and literature reviews.

(a) Homelessness in economics.

O’Flaherty (1996) *Making Room: The Economics of Homelessness*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

O’Flaherty (2019) “Homelessness Research: A Guide for Economists (and Friends)”, [Journal of Housing Economics](#), vol. 44, 1-25.

(b) Homelessness in public policy.

Gould Ellen and O’Flaherty (2010) *How to House the Homeless*, [Russell Sage Foundation](#).

Shinn and Khadduri (2020) *In The Midst of Plenty: Homelessness and What To Do About It*, Contemporary Social Issues Series, Wiley-Blackwell, Hoboken, NJ.

Evans, Phillips and Ruffini (2021) “Policies to Reduce and Prevent Homelessness: What we know and gaps in the research”, [Journal of Policy Analysis and Management](#), vol. 40 no. 3, 914-963.

(c) Homelessness in sociology.

Lee, Tyler and Wright (2010) “The New Homelessness Revisited”, [Annual Review of Sociology](#), vol. 36, 501-521.

Topic 2: New data sources.

Corinth and Finley (2019) “The Geography of Unsheltered Homelessness in the City: Evidence from “311” Calls in New York”, [Journal of Regional Science](#), vol. 60 no. 4, 628-652.

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² Adrien Bilal, Matt Jacob, Laura Nicolae, Patrick Power, Rachel Pomerantz, Dominic Russell, and Shivram Viswanathan.

Meyer, Wyse, Grunwaldt, Medalia and Wu (2021) “Learning about Homelessness Using Linked Survey and Administrative Data”, [NBER Working Paper](#) no. 28861.

Meyer, Wyse, and Corinth (2023) “The Size and Census Coverage of the U.S. Homeless Population”, [NBER Working Paper](#) no. 30163.

Topic 3: Sources of geographic variation in homelessness.

Honig and Filer (1993) “Causes of Intercity Variation in Homelessness”, [American Economic Review](#), vol. 83, no. 1, 248-255.

Quigley, Raphael and Smolensky (2001) “Homeless in America, Homeless in California”, [The Review of Economics and Statistics](#), vol. 83, no. 1, 37-51.

Lee, Price-Spratlen and Kanan (2003) “Determinants of Homelessness in Metropolitan Areas”, [Journal of Urban Affairs](#), vol. 25, no. 3, 335-356.

Byrne, Munley, Fargo, Montgomery and Culhane (2013) “New Perspectives on Community-Level Determinants of Homelessness”, [Journal of Urban Affairs](#), vol. 35, no. 5, 607-625.

Fargo, Munley, Byrne, Montgomery and Culhane (2013) “Community-Level Characteristics Associated With Variation in Rates of Homelessness Among Families and Single Adults”, [American Journal of Public Health](#), vol. 103, no. S2, S340-S347.

Corinth and Lucas (2018) “When warm and cold don’t mix: The implications of the climate for the determinants of homelessness”, [Journal of Housing Economics](#), vol. 41, 45-56.

Topic 4: Pathways into and out of homelessness.

(a) Overview.

O’Flaherty (2012) “Individual Homelessness: Entries, Exits, and Policy”, [Journal of Housing Economics](#), vol. 21, no. 2, 77-100.

(b) Entry into homelessness.

Early (2005) “An Empirical Investigation of the Determinants of Street Homelessness”, [Journal of Housing Economics](#), vol. 14, no. 1, 27-47.

Von Wachter, Bertrand, Pollack, Rountree and Blackwell (2019) “Predicting and Preventing Homelessness in Los Angeles”, [California Policy Lab report](#).

Collinson, Humphries, Mader, Reed, Tannenbaum and van Dijk (2022) “Eviction and Poverty in American Cities”, [NBER Working Paper](#) no. 30382.

(c) Exits from homelessness.

Kuhn and Culhane (1998) "Applying Cluster Analysis to Test a Typology of Homelessness by Pattern of Shelter Utilization: Results from the Analysis of Administrative Data", [*American Journal of Community Psychology*](#), vol. 26, no. 2, 207-232.

Goodman, Messeri and O'Flaherty (2014) "How Effective Homelessness Prevention Impacts the Length of Shelter Spells", [*Journal of Housing Economics*](#), vol. 23, 55-62.

Cobb-Clark, Herault, Scutella and Tseng (2016) "A Journey Home: What Drives how Long People are Homeless?", [*Journal of Urban Economics*](#), vol 91, 57-72

Topic 5: Evaluating government policy.

(a) Programs aimed directly at homelessness.

Cragg and O'Flaherty (1999) "Do Homeless Shelter Conditions Determine Shelter Population? The Case of the Dinkins Deluge", [*Journal of Urban Economics*](#), vol. 46, no. 3, 377-415.

Early and Olsen (2002) "Subsidized Housing, Emergency Shelters, and Homelessness: An Empirical Investigation Using Data from the 1990 Census", [*Advances in Economic Analysis & Policy*](#), vol 2, no. 1, 1-34.

Sadowski, Kee, VanderWeele and Buchanan (2009) "Effect of a Housing and Case Management Program on Emergency Department Visits and Hospitalizations Among Chronically Ill Homeless Adults: A Randomized Trial", [*Journal of the American Medical Association*](#), vol 301, no. 17, 1771-1778.

Rolston, Geyer, Locke, and Abt. Associates (2013) "Final Report: Evaluation of the Homebase Community Prevention Program", [*report for the NYC Department of Homeless Services*](#).

Gubtis, Shinn, Bell, Wood, Dastrup, Solari, Brown, Dunton, Lin, McInnis, Rodriguez, Savidge, Spellman and Abt. Associates (2015) "Family Options Study: Short-Term Impacts of Housing and Services Interventions for Homeless Families", [*HUD Report*](#).

Stergiopoulos, Hwang, Gozdzik, Nisenbaum, Latimer, Rabouin, Adair, Bourque, Connelly, Frankish, Katz, Mason, Misir, O'Brien, Sareen, Schutz, Singer, Streiner, Vasiliadis and Goering (2015) "Effect of scattered-site housing using rent supplements and intensive case management on housing stability among homeless adults with mental illness: a randomized trial", [*Journal of the American Medical Association*](#), vol. 313, no. 9, 905-915.

Evans, Sullivan and Wallskog (2016) "The Impact of Homelessness Prevention Programs on Homelessness", [*Science*](#), vol. 353, no. 6300, 694-699.

Popov (2017) "Homeless Programs and Social Insurance", [*Working Paper*](#).

Corinth (2017) “The Impact of Permanent Supportive Housing on Homeless Populations”, [Journal of Housing Economics](#), vol. 35, 69-84.

Cohen (2022) “The Effect of Housing First Programs on Future Homelessness and Socioeconomic Outcomes”, [Working Paper](#).

Brounstein and Wieselthier (2022) “The Fiscal Impact of Housing the Homeless: Evidence from Housing Programs in Los Angeles”, [Working Paper](#).

Phillips and Sullivan (2022) “Personalizing Homelessness Prevention: Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial”, [Working Paper](#).

Phillips and Sullivan (2023) “Do Homelessness Prevention Programs Prevent Homelessness? Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial,” [Working Paper](#).

(b) General equilibrium models of government policy, eviction, and homelessness.

Mansur, Quigley, Raphael and Smolensky (2002) “Examining Policies to Reduce Homelessness Using a General Equilibrium Model of the Housing Market”, [Journal of Urban Economics](#), vol. 52, no. 2, 316-340.

Corbae, Glover and Nattinger (2022) “Equilibrium Eviction”, [Working Paper](#).

Imrohoroglu & Zhao (2022) “Homelessness”, [Working Paper](#).

Abramson (2022) “The Welfare Effects of Eviction and Homelessness Policies”, [Working Paper](#).

Topic 6: Mental health and substance use.

(a) Mental health.

Culhane and Metraux (2002) “Public Service Reductions Associated with Placement of Homeless Persons with Severe Mental Illness in Supportive Housing”, [Housing Policy Debates](#), vol. 13, no. 1, 107-163.

(b) Substance use.

Chatterjee, Obando, Strickland, Nestler, Harrington-Levey, Williams, LaCoursiere-Zuccherro (2017) “Shelter-Based Opioid Treatment: Increasing Access to Addiction Treatment in a Family Shelter”, [American Public Health Association](#), vol. 107, no. 7, 1092-1094.

Aldridge, Story, Hwang, Nordentoft, Luchenski, Hartwell, Tweed, Lewer, Katikreddi and Hayward (2018) “Morbidity and Mortality in Homeless Individuals, Prisoners, Sex Workers, and Individuals with Substance Use Disorders in High-Income Countries: a Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis”, [The Lancet](#), vol. 391, no. 10117, 241-250.