

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-24-106688](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

More than 650,000 people experienced homelessness on a single night in January 2023, according to HUD, the highest number since reporting began in 2007. According to the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, ending homelessness requires an adequate supply of both housing and supportive services.

House Report 117-402 (2023) includes a provision for GAO to review supportive services. This report (1) describes supportive services HUD's CoC program provides and challenges CoCs face in providing them; and (2) compares services the CoC program funds with three selected HHS programs.

GAO conducted a generalizable survey of all 387 CoC collaborative applicants (lead agencies, such as state or local governments and nonprofit organizations, designated by a CoC to apply for program funds). GAO received 275 responses for a 71 percent response rate. The survey included questions about CoC supportive services, funding sources, and challenges. GAO also analyzed available supportive services data from HUD's CoC program and selected HHS programs (Community Services Block Grant, Health Center, and PATH) for 2018 through 2022 (the most recent available data) and reviewed program guidance. Programs were selected because they fund supportive services and serve wide-ranging populations. GAO also interviewed HUD and HHS officials and a nongeneralizable sample of six CoC collaborative applicants, chosen to obtain a mix of geographic areas and rates of homelessness.

View [GAO-24-106688](#). For more information, contact Alicia Puente Cackley at (202) 512-8678 or CackleyA@gao.gov.

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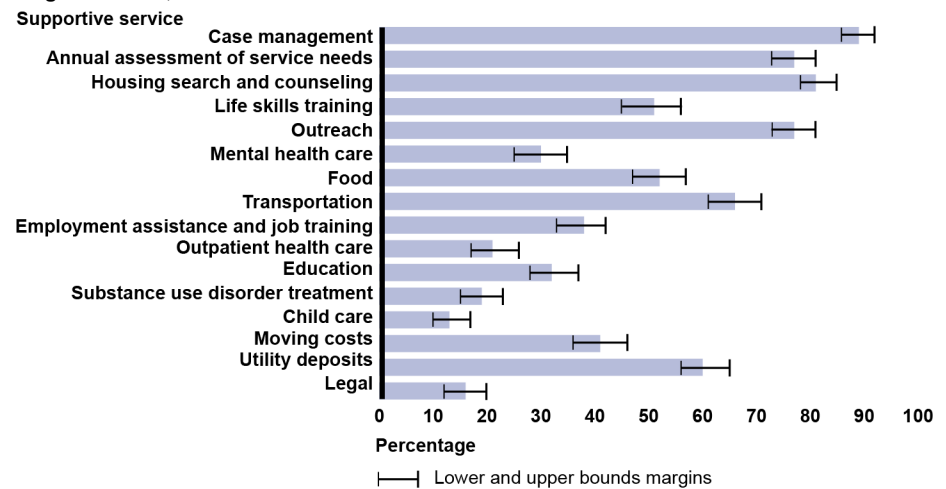
HOMELESSNESS

Supportive Services Provided by Federal Programs

What GAO Found

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) program funds supportive services that help people experiencing or at risk of homelessness obtain or maintain housing. According to a generalizable GAO survey, the CoC program funded several types of supportive services in fiscal year 2023, such as case management and housing search and counseling. CoCs—regional or local planning bodies that coordinate homelessness response funding—also used other funding to provide supportive services. These sources included the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Medicaid program and Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program, which focuses on the needs of people experiencing mental illness.

Percentage of Collaborative Applicants That Provided Each Service Using Continuum of Care Program Funds, Fiscal Year 2023



Source: GAO. | [GAO-24-106688](#)

Notes: Collaborative applicants are lead agencies designated by Continuums of Care to apply for program funds. Survey estimates are based on GAO's generalizable survey of collaborative applicants and have a margin of error of plus or minus 10 percent or less at the 95 percent confidence level.

CoCs face funding and other challenges, according to the survey. These included lack of annual increases to CoC grant funding for supportive services and difficulty hiring and retaining staff. HUD has taken steps to help address these challenges. For example, HUD asked Congress for authority to increase supportive services funding. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, authorized HUD to adjust grant renewal amounts so that CoCs providing supportive services can operate at substantially the same levels. HUD also supplied technical assistance materials to CoCs on recruiting and retaining staff.

The CoC program and three HHS programs (Community Services Block Grant, Health Center, and PATH) funded different types of supportive services, according to available HUD and HHS data for 2018–2022. The CoC program primarily funded case management, while the HHS programs mostly provided health or food-related services.