



Family Promise Night Without A Bed policy toolkit
June 1, 2021

1. Prepare a short, simple handout with more information about the cause. This should be a single page handout you can post and link to on your website, email to stakeholders, and/or provide in print, if you are interacting directly with policymakers. Include clear, brief information:

- a) Introduction to your agency. For example:
We address the issue of family homelessness in *[insert town/city/county/region]* by providing shelter and *[insert services]* to *[insert number]* of homeless families each year.
- b) Introduction to family homelessness in your geography. For example:
[Insert number] of families experience homelessness year in *[insert town/city/county/region]*. Some have lost their jobs, while others are working; some are battling health challenges; some have faced violence and abuse. All need help to keep their children safe and in school, access child care and living wage employment, and find affordable and sustainable housing.
- c) What do you need? Be brief and focus on just a few specific policy requests. For example:
Please
 - provide flexibility in regulations to eliminate barriers for us to help.
 - do what you can to make sure American Rescue Plan funds reach children and families in our community.
 - do what you can to make sure our local continuum of care targets American Rescue Plan funds for at-risk families to our children and families.
 - consider legislation to prioritize our homeless families for subsidized child care.
 - consider legislation to prioritize our homeless families for affordable housing.
 - take steps to increase the supply of affordable housing in our community.

2. Inform policymakers about Night Without a Bed. Send them a short email to invite them to participate and tell them what you need. For example:

Dear *Senator/Representative/Assemblyman/Mayor/Council Member*,

I am writing from *[insert Organization Name]*. We provide shelter and *[insert services]* to *[insert number]* of homeless families in your *[district/city]* each year. On June 26, we are participating in **Night Without a Bed**, a social media challenge to raise awareness about family homelessness. You can participate in this campaign by following us on Twitter (*insert your Twitter handle*) and tweeting about family homelessness with the hashtag #NightWithoutABed on June 26.

We need your help to keep children safe and help families get back on their feet. Please *[choose one or two of your primary needs from this list, or other needs]*:

- *provide flexibility in regulations to eliminate barriers for us to help*
- *do what you can to make sure American Rescue Plan funds reach children and families.*
- *do what you can to make sure our local continuum of care targets American Rescue Plan funds for at-risk families to our children and families*
- *consider legislation to prioritize our homeless families for subsidized child care*
- *consider legislation to prioritize our homeless families for affordable housing*
- *take steps to increase the supply of affordable housing in our community]*

We welcome the opportunity to speak with you about these issues. **Can you let us know when you or your staff might be available to meet with us in person or virtually?**

Thank you,
[Insert name and title]

You can find policymakers' contact information by googling their name or visiting https://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/.

3. When you meet with policymakers, consult [Family Promise Best Practices in Meeting with Elected Officials](#) for tips to make your meeting count!

4. Sample #NightWithoutABed tweets. Find policymakers' Twitter accounts by searching for their names on Twitter. Tag them in your tweets (using @ and their Twitter handle). Add to each tweet a link to the webpage where people can get more information.

We serve *[insert number]* families experiencing #homelessness each year. Make sure #ARP funds reach families and children who don't have stable housing by contacting your policymaker. *[Tag your legislator]* #NightWithoutABed

[Insert number] of children in our community know what it's like to spend a #NightWithoutABed every night. They need to be prioritized for child care so their parents can get back to work. *[Tag your legislator]*

The pandemic has devastated families experiencing #homelessness, and today we raise up their needs to you *[tag your legislator]*. Address the housing crisis so no family has to spend a #NightWithoutABed.

Did you know that in our town/county, *[insert number]* children are #homeless on a given night *[tag your legislator]*? Help us make sure the billions in #ARP funds for housing and shelter are prioritizing them! #NightWithoutABed

On this #NightWithoutABed we need your help *[tag your legislator]*. Don't let technicalities in definitions of #homelessness leave our children sleeping on crowded, unsafe floors or in motels. Contact local homeless continuums and providers and make sure #ARP funds reach our #homeless babies. #NightWithoutABed

We are using the #NightWithoutABed event to help *[tag your legislator]* and our whole community understand the plight of families who are #homeless every night. To support families, experiencing #homelessness, we need flexibility in regulations to help them get back on their feet.

What does it do to children to wonder where they will sleep every night? Is it safe? Will they have food? *[Tag your legislator]* join us for #NightWithoutABed and help the *[insert number]* families experiencing #homelessness in our town.