



Northern Colorado Continuum of Care’s Call to Prioritize Housing and Supportive Services and Denouncement of Punitive Actions

July 8, 2024

We, the Northern Colorado Continuum of Care (NoCo CoC) Governing Board, strongly oppose the recent Johnson vs. Grants Pass ruling by the Supreme Court. This decision, which sanctions cities to penalize individuals for sleeping outside when no other safe alternatives are available, starkly contradicts our established priorities and proven best practices in addressing homelessness and improving housing stability.

The NoCo CoC is unwavering in our dedication to making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. Our mission is to create a seamless system of care by leveraging collaborative networks and evidence-based practices, such as the Housing First model. This approach prioritizes providing permanent housing as the initial step toward self-sufficiency and stability for individuals experiencing homelessness, allowing them to address other life challenges more effectively.

The Johnson vs. Grants Pass ruling fundamentally undermines these principles by allowing for the criminalization of the condition of being homeless rather than addressing its root causes. Penalizing individuals for unavoidable behaviors associated with homelessness, like sleeping in public spaces, is not only ineffective but also profoundly inhumane. It misdirects local resources away from essential services and housing solutions, diverting them towards enforcement and legal processes. Furthermore, forcing individuals experiencing homelessness out of one city merely relocates the issue to another, failing to resolve the underlying problem and placing an undue burden on neighboring communities.

We remain resolute in advocating for inclusive and effective solutions that uphold the dignity and rights of all community members. We call upon policymakers and communities to reject punitive measures and instead endorse policies that ensure safe and stable housing for everyone.

Respectfully and In Community,
The Northern Colorado Continuum of Care Governing Board

Together We Can End Homelessness
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