47 MILLION AMERICANS fall below the poverty line. Many teeter on the brink of homelessness. Faith-based organizations are providing the solutions communities need.

A new study, Assessing the Faith-Based Response to Homelessness in America: Findings from Eleven Cities (Feb. 2017) from Baylor University’s Institute for Studies of Religion reveals that faith-based organizations (FBOs) provide services on par with or greater than many municipalities. These programs are leading in addressing homelessness issues, including everything from emergency service needs to support programs necessary to deal with the root causes of homelessness. FBOs are also at the forefront of innovating real long-term solutions like education, job readiness and addiction recovery.

PROVIDING THE SAFETY NET OF SAFETY NETS

58 PERCENT OF EMERGENCY SHELTER BEDS are provided by FBOs—a number that increases with the addition of regular homelessness support conducted at churches, synagogues, mosques and more.

EMERGENCY SHELTER BEDS IN 11 CITIES SURVEYED

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Faith Based</th>
<th>Non Faith Based</th>
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<td>11,465</td>
<td>8,425</td>
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TREATING CAUSES AND SYMPTOMS

What federal agencies and public policy makers often see as the cause of homelessness—namely the lack of housing—many FBOs see and treat as a symptom of complex issues. The study identifies significant and pervasive philosophical differences on what organizations view as the immediate needs of the homeless. In other words, FBOs prioritize holistic before, during and after care for those at risk for or experiencing homelessness rather than focusing on housing first.

UNDERLYING FACTORS ADDRESSED BY FBOs

- Poverty
- Unemployment
- Affordable Housing
- Foreclosures
- Domestic Violence
- Addiction
- Incarceration
- Mental and Physical Health
SPOTLIGHTING FBOs AND HEALTHCARE

Chronic health issues too often plague families suffering from homelessness. With no health coverage and little ability to pay for services, mental health issues and disabilities keep many experiencing homelessness from achieving employment and stability—and treating them can be very costly for communities.

INNOVATING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Collaboration among FBOs, community groups, private industry, and local, state, and federal government increases the effectiveness of programs addressing homelessness and its underlying issues. The end result? Healthier communities around the country.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS

In the 11 cities surveyed, this meant a $119 million in savings over three years.

“People don’t become homeless when they run out of money, at least not right away. They become homeless when they run out of relationships. And this means that the solution to homelessness necessarily involves a reestablishment of relationships and community.”

—New City Initiative, Portland, Ore.

Assessing the Faith-based Response to Homelessness in America: Findings from Eleven Cities
Byron Johnson, William Wubbenhorst, Alfreda Wubbenhorst and Sumner Wubbenhorst
February 2017

—FAITH AND THE COMMON GOOD—