



The Institute of Global Homelessness (IGH) launched the first Vanguard Cities cohort in 2017 with key global strategic partners to begin pioneering work in 13 Vanguard Cities across 6 continents. Each city made a commitment to significantly reduce or end street homelessness in reflection of their local context. The initiative is designed to support and uplift local expertise and innovation while reaping the benefits of both community and global exchange. IGH has expanded our offering to communities by creating the Vanguard Network, a global knowledge exchange on homeless programs, policy, and research. In the Vanguard Program, IGH leverages the foundation of its work — supporting leadership, exchanging knowledge, creating a global infrastructure, and advocating for change — to make a meaningful impact on street homelessness in cities across the globe

VANGUARD PROGRAM: WAYS TO ENGAGE

There are two levels of engagement to match communities' needs, capacity, and current systems. The Vanguard Program Cohort is designed for cities and regions that are ready to commit to goals to reduce homelessness and includes a formal agreement, regular homeless enumeration, and collaboration with stakeholders across sectors to reach goals. For cities and regions, that are not ready to sign a formal agreement, the Vanguard Network is a great opportunity to engage in knowledge exchanges, trainings, and the Vanguard Summit.

2025 Vanguard Cohort

In the Vanguard Cohort, IGH works with cities and regions on their strategy, measurement, and program implementation—and in doing so, helps them meet their quantitative and qualitative goals. Through its global network of homeless experts, IGH provides targeted technical assistance to address the challenges of ending street homelessness in each city. This Vanguard partnership further elevates each cities' work by supporting plans to end homelessness, engaging stakeholders in coalition building, and sharing their work with an international network of stakeholders and researchers. The Vanguard Program Cohort also includes membership in the Vanguard Network.



A motivating goal linked to a global movement:

Your city will be part of meeting a clear, ambitious goal shared by peers across the world.



Measuring homelessness according to local context:

We believe that to end street homelessness, a city must have clear data to measure progress. If you do not have this in place, IGH will connect you to the support you need.



Global Knowledge Exchange:

IGH convenes leaders from communities across the world to share innovations, talk through challenges and discuss details of what works in ending homelessness.



Supporting your local homelessness plans and toughest challenges:

IGH connects you to homelessness experts and research to provide technical assistance to help you reach community goals and provide insights on specific areas where you are struggling.



A local and global spotlight on effective practices in your city:

IGH will share your work with our global network, advocate for your programs to key stakeholders, and support coalition building in your community.

Vanguard Network

The Vanguard Network brings together homelessness practitioners, government leaders, people of lived experience and researchers to exchange knowledge and evidence in an international community of practice. If you lead a homeless organization, work for a city, regional, or national government, or represent a collaborative group working on homelessness, we invite you to join the network. Members will attend meetings bridging research to practice including policy round table discussions, cohort calls, and technical sessions. They will also be invited to engage United Nations advocacy campaigns and contribute to IGH events and publications. More information on the Network and how to join can be found on the [Vanguard Network website](#).

Empowering a global movement

The Network will connect members across the world who are working to end homelessness and forward the international advocacy work on homelessness including at the United Nations.

Sharing solutions from local to global to local

The network aims to build a community of practice with with homelessness practitioners, government leaders, people of lived experience, and researchers at local, national, and international levels.

Growing the international evidence base on what works

The Network provides a global platform to share innovations, good practices, and emerging research through knowledge exchanges, cohort calls, policy round tables, and technical calls.

OUR APPROACH

We have found that to make long-term systematic change, each community needs the following:

Multi-sector collaboration. Bringing in key stakeholders from government, civil society, health, housing, police and carceral systems; is key to have collective impact in order to end homelessness.

Data. Homelessness data, assessments, and analysis is a crucial part of every community's homelessness response by allowing for informed decision-making, understanding trends, tracking progress towards outcomes, and building targeted programs.

Prevention & Housing with Support Services. Prevention stops homelessness before it occurs. Housing-led strategies can quickly resolve homelessness by providing housing/services based on each client's needs.

Equity & Inclusion. Engaging, consulting, and centering people with lived experience and combatting discrimination at every level is critical in reaching sustainable and effective solutions.



Attendees at the 2018 Vanguard City Summit

ENDING STREET HOMELESSNESS IN VANGUARD CITIES ACROSS THE GLOBE: AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE STUDY

Conducted by Heriot-Watt University's I-SPHERE and GISS Bremen the research investigated what works and what does not in addressing street homelessness across IGH's first cohort of 13 Vanguard Cities. The study found that, "key enablers of progress in reducing street homelessness included the presence of a lead coordinating agency, and coordinated entry to homelessness services, alongside investment in specialized and evidence-based interventions, such as assertive street outreach services, individual case management and Housing First. Key barriers to progress included heavy reliance on undignified and sometimes unsafe communal shelters, a preoccupation with meeting immediate physiological needs, and sometimes perceived spiritual needs, rather than structural and system change, and a lack of emphasis on prevention. Aggressive enforcement interventions by police and city authorities, and documentary and identification barriers, were also counter-productive to attempts to reduce street homelessness." Read the study and access related resources on the [Heriot-Watt website](#).

SELECTED PROGRAM RESULTS FROM 2020 VANGUARD CITIES

- Coached Greater Manchester, UK on goal setting and strategies to end homelessness with the city reporting a 57 percent reduction in rough sleeping in 2020
- Supported the City of Sydney and State of New South Wales to launch a collective impact partnership with government and civil society partners and start collecting administrative data to track progress on their reduction targets
- Assisted Rijeka, Croatia in conducting their first street count
- Worked with a broad stakeholder group in Glasgow, Scotland on their enumeration strategy, and partnership models with the city now reporting only five people living on the street
- Supported Santiago, Chile in the development of their neighborhood homelessness strategy and launch of a Housing First pilot
- Worked with city officials in Little Rock, USA to create a homelessness stakeholder survey and report on programs and setting new priorities
- Conducted a homelessness system review and advised stakeholders in Adelaide, Australia on their strategy and housing policies, which led to the creation of a \$20M Prevention Fund by the South Australia government



First Cohort of Vanguard Cities