

# Oklahoma Homelessness Strategy

## Five Pathways for a Modern, Effective Statewide Response

Homelessness in Oklahoma is not a single issue. It is a collection of distinct challenges that require different approaches, different interventions, and a modern, coordinated system that tracks outcomes and connects services. Treating every individual the same — regardless of why they became homeless — leads to ineffective spending, unsafe conditions, and revolving-door cycles through jails, ERs, and encampments. This policy brief outlines a statewide, data-driven homelessness response built around **five clear pathways**, supported by modern technology through the **AXIS Platform** and Oklahoma-wide coordination. This document is part of the statewide modernization framework proposed by **Wagner for Governor 2026**. More information is available at <https://billyjwagner.com>.

### 1. Work-Ready Rapid Housing (60–120 Days)

Situational homelessness — eviction, job loss, medical bills, family disruption — is the largest and most solvable form of homelessness in Oklahoma. These individuals do not require long-term intervention. They require stability, structure, and a short runway to regain footing. **Key Components:** • Short-term transitional housing (2–4 months) • Workforce placement and job training • Financial recovery support (budgeting, debt stabilization) • Case management with measurable weekly benchmarks • Mandatory progress reviews and exit planning **Purpose:** Move people out of homelessness quickly, reduce shelter strain, and prevent long-term dependency.

### 2. Statewide Mental Health Stabilization Units

Many individuals experiencing homelessness suffer from severe mental illness. Today, police and hospitals cycle these individuals between ERs, jails, and streets because Oklahoma lacks appropriate stabilization options. **Key Components:** • Small, distributed stabilization centers across Oklahoma • Police drop-off alternative to jail booking • Hospital diversion for non-criminal mental health crises • Medication, evaluation, and intensive stabilization • Transition to supervised housing and long-term treatment **Purpose:** Reduce the jail/ER revolving door and provide humane, medically appropriate care.

### 3. Recovery Housing With Guardrails

Addiction-driven homelessness cannot be solved with unconditional housing. Oklahoma needs a model that supports treatment, accountability, and measurable recovery progress. **Key Components:** • Structured recovery housing • Required participation in treatment programs • Drug testing and regular

compliance checks • Peer accountability and progress-based privileges • Integration with workforce and social services **Purpose:** Break the addiction cycle while promoting safety, accountability, and long-term stability.

#### 4. Youth Safe Housing Program

Youth homelessness is often invisible — students couch-surfing, fleeing unsafe homes, or quietly dropping out. Early intervention is the key to preventing long-term adult homelessness. The **AXIS Platform** allows the state to identify at-risk youth early by tracking attendance patterns, crisis reports, school counselor flags, family instability indicators, and DHS risk factors — all in one secure system.

**Key Components:** • Partnerships with SDE, DHS, schools, and youth services • AXIS-based early-warning indicators for at-risk students • Immediate access to safe transitional housing • Counseling, mentorship, and education continuity • Family mediation and long-term support **Purpose:** Stop the pipeline to adult homelessness by intervening early, when change is most effective.

#### 5. Veteran Priority Housing Pipeline

Veterans face unique challenges: PTSD, disability, trauma, and gaps in accessing benefits. Oklahoma has the resources to support its veterans — but the system is too fragmented for them to use effectively. By integrating VA benefit eligibility directly into the **AXIS Platform**, the state can immediately match veterans to the resources they qualify for. **Key Components:** • One-stop eligibility check integrated into AXIS • Direct assignment to vouchers, housing, and mental health services • Priority placement and monitored follow-up • No more navigating 20 disconnected offices **Purpose:** Ensure every Oklahoma veteran receives housing and support faster and more efficiently than any state in the nation.

#### Statewide Outcome

When Oklahoma treats people based on *why* they are homeless — not simply *where* they are sleeping — the state achieves: • Reduced street homelessness • Safer communities and fewer encampments • Lower pressure on police, ERs, and shelters • Stronger recovery outcomes • Better protection for children and youth • Efficient use of taxpayer dollars • Transparent performance reporting • A healthier, more stable population statewide This Five-Pathway Strategy, powered by the AXIS modernization framework, represents a realistic, scalable, and compassionate solution for Oklahoma's future.

*This policy brief is part of the statewide modernization and transparency platform proposed by **Wagner for Governor 2026**. For more information, visit <https://billyjwagner.com>.*