



# CITY RESIDENTS SUPPORT INVESTMENTS IN PUBLIC HEALTH SOLUTIONS

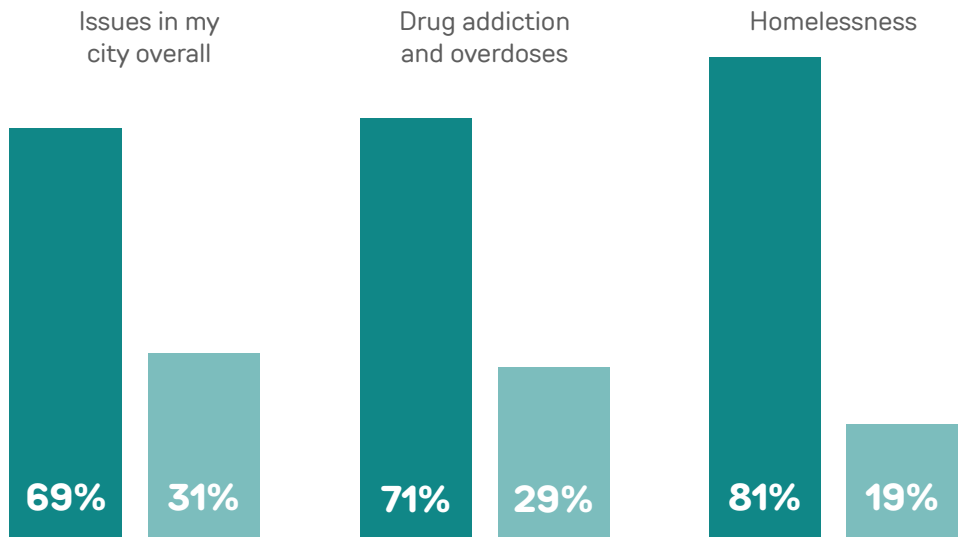
The [Big Cities Health Coalition](#) polled residents in its member jurisdictions (35 big cities\*) about how government should address drug use and related issues like homelessness. The results show broad support for a public health approach to addressing these problems – as well as support for increased investment in those solutions.



## City residents support a public health approach to addressing drug use and homelessness.

Seven in 10 city residents think a public health approach is the right way to tackle issues of homelessness and drug use and improve the overall well being of their city. This includes prioritizing access to drug treatment programs and affordable housing over arrests and incarceration.

### The best approach to addressing...



... is to ... ■ “fix the underlying problems” / focus on public health strategies ■ “get tough” / focus on law enforcement strategies

\* BCHC conducted an online audience segmentation and attitudes survey with 1,511 city residents, four virtual focus groups, and an online survey of 1,268 city residents that focused on attitudes and messaging. Participants were recruited from [BCHC's 35 member cities](#), who collectively represent 1/5 of the American population.

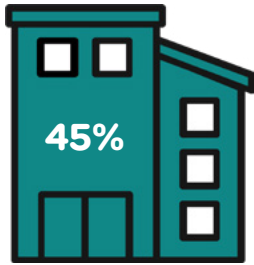
Photo credits: Philadelphia Department of Public Health worker explains how to use a naloxone kit (above); San Francisco Department of Public Health street medicine team (next page)

## City residents think economic factors and poor mental health are the top drivers of crime, substance use, and homelessness.

Two thirds or more say that unaffordable housing, high inflation and cost of living, and the mental health crisis in the U.S. are each main causes or a big cause of these other problems. They see foundational solutions as required in order to solve crime, homelessness, and drug use and overdoses in their cities.

### The top drivers of crime, drug overdose, and homelessness in my city are ...

Unaffordable housing



High inflation & cost of living



Mental health crisis



Number indicates percent who listed this cause in their top 3 drivers.



## POLICY NEXT STEPS

Facing record-level overdose numbers, [local communities need consistent funding](#) to ensure their overdose prevention efforts can stem the tide of drug-related injury and death.

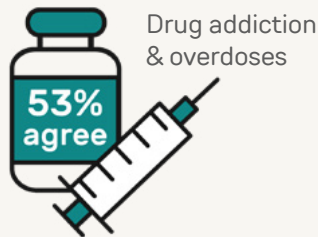
Local and state health departments rely on funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) program. In fact, for most local health departments this is the only federal funding specifically for substance use work. These dollars support critical work in prevention, harm reduction, referral into treatment, and data from the field on fatal and non-fatal overdose.

Federal policymakers can also support this work by reducing barriers to treatments such as methadone and buprenorphine.

## City residents want greater resources to support effective services and programs.

Six in 10 city residents think their city does not invest enough in services and programs that save lives and improve health. Additional investments are needed at the federal level to ensure adequate funding in communities across the country.

My city invests in and provides too little in services and programs in ...



Drug addiction & overdoses



Homelessness



The Big Cities Health Coalition is a forum for the leaders of America's largest metropolitan health departments to exchange strategies and jointly address issues to promote and protect the health and safety of their residents. Collectively, BCHC's 35 member jurisdictions directly impact more than 61 million people, or 1 in 5 Americans. [bigcitieshealth.org](https://bigcitieshealth.org)

### Contact us

Send questions or requests for follow-up calls to [info@bigcitieshealth.org](mailto:info@bigcitieshealth.org)

### Learn more

View more recommendations on our website: [bigcitieshealth.org/harm-reduction-messaging](https://bigcitieshealth.org/harm-reduction-messaging)