



Homelessness in Baltimore

While Mayor Sheila Dixon promises to end homelessness in Baltimore over the next ten years, recent events point towards a "solution" of displacement and criminalization. This morning (12/14), the city fire department evicted the tents and shacks along Guilford Ave. near I-83 which had been serving as makeshift homes for dozens of Baltimore residents. Told only the night before that remaining in their homes would be cause for arrest the next morning, today's incident is the latest in a string of similiar incidents in the Baltimore area. In September of this year, the [ACLU won a partial victory against the city of Elkton](#), which had bulldozed, without a warning or warrant, a homeless encampment there. This summer, [the ACLU also registered objections against the Baltimore Downtown Partnership](#), a semi-public agency whose security forces, threatening to throw away their possessions, cleared a group of homeless people from under I83 along Guilford Ave. Many eating at the Our Daily Bread soup kitchen this afternoon felt that Baltimore was indeed trying to clear the homeless from the city rather than offer any permanent solutions, with some deciding to leave the city for Baltimore county.

Meanwhile, advocates for the homeless in Baltimore claim that the city's policies risk criminalizing the homeless rather than helping them. Health Care for the Homeless, which is holding [vigil for those who died homeless in 2007 on December 21 at 4:30 PM at the Washington Monument in Mt. Vernon](#), held a forum on the criminalization of the homeless on Dec. 5th - [you can watch the video from the event here](#). Even more troubling, [a September 2007 report by the Abell Foundation](#) details how Baltimore is systematically eliminating the kind of public housing that might actually help get homeless people off the street, with a 42% reduction in available public housing over 15 years, and planning to eliminate another 2400 homes, with no plans for replacement, in the immediate future.

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