

Marybeth Shinn

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Vanderbilt University**

Nashville, TN, US

Expert in how to prevent and end homelessness

Biography

Marybeth (Beth) Shinn studies how to prevent and end homelessness and create opportunities for groups that face social exclusion. She seeks to use research to shape social policy. The 12-site Family Options study she conducted with colleagues at Abt Associates and Vanderbilt shows that offering long-term rental subsidies to families in homeless shelters not only ends homelessness for most but has radiating benefits for parents and children and reduces problems like substance abuse, domestic violence, and psychological distress that can sometimes cause homelessness. Qualitative interviews with 80 of the families across four sites helped to understand families' experiences in the homeless service system, how they make housing decisions, and why so many parents become separated from their children. Prevention of homelessness requires both that programs be effective and that they go to the "right" people – those for whom they will make the most difference. Targeting may be the harder problem. Thousands of people apply for New York City's HomeBase homelessness prevention services each year. Shinn and students developed targeting models that the City has adopted to get services to the people most likely to become homeless without them, and have shown that there are no people too "risky" to serve.

Areas of Expertise

Affordable Housing, Social Exclusion, Homelessness, Poverty

Education

Radcliffe College, Harvard University

B.A. Social Relations

University of Michigan

M.A. Social Psychology

University of Michigan

Ph.D. Community Psychology, Social Psychology

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