

# Study details how business districts target homeless people

October 4 2018, by Andrew Cohen

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"Ron," a homeless man seen here on First Street in San Francisco. Credit: Jack Ottaway

The first major study of California's Business Improvement Districts shows that they are increasingly targeting homeless people and excluding

them from public spaces.

Conducted by Berkeley Law's Policy Advocacy Clinic on behalf of the Western Regional Advocacy Project, the study details how BIDs have proliferated with little oversight, sometimes violate California law and infringe on [homeless people](#)'s legal rights.

A popular urban revitalization tool, BIDs are public-private financing entities that serve the interests of business and property owners. Usually located in downtown areas with a heavy [business](#) concentration, California BIDs collect and spend hundreds of millions of dollars annually—some of which comes from taxpayers through publicly owned property.

"Like other urban renewal efforts, BIDs were supposed to help fill the government resource and service void," says clinic Faculty Director Jeffrey Selbin. "But researchers and policymakers have paid little attention to the rise of BIDs and their actual influence on municipal and state affairs."

**More information:** Jeffrey Selbin et al. Homeless Exclusion Districts: How California Business Improvement Districts Use Policy Advocacy and Policing Practices to Exclude Homeless People from Public Space, *SSRN Electronic Journal* (2018). [DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.3221446](https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3221446)

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