



The Challenge of Homelessness in Oregon

What's to Be Done?

January 2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

As an elected official, I know I'm supposed to say... it's only going to get better from here, but I personally don't believe that, so I'm not going to tell you that... We're in this for the long haul. There are no easy answers to this problem. If there were easy answers, they'd already be found.

-- Mayor Ted Wheeler¹

After two years of looking at data and reports, talking to agency heads and people experiencing homelessness, it is clear to the compilers of this inquiry that there is widespread activity in trying to address the problem of homelessness in Oregon and in the Portland region. However, currently there appear to be (1) a lack of meaningful coordination, (2) a huge need to ramp up to the required capacities, and (3) the absence of a final solution to moving people experiencing homelessness off the streets. The purposes of this report are (1) to assist in coordination by providing the findings of many other reports, studies, and news in one place, (2) to locate and suggest ways to speed up the scaling to capacity, and (3) to offer a plan for providing shelter to those experiencing homelessness and off of the public areas in a manner that meets legal, budgetary, and humanitarian requirements. Examination is required of the standard model of a ladder, which generally is: (a) prevention, (b) shelter, (c) transition housing, (d) stable housing, and (e) mainstreaming and jobs. It must be nuanced by recognizing the predominant causes of homelessness, namely: (i) economic conditions confronting the working poor; (ii) mental illness, (iii) addictions; (iv) domestic violence; (v) unaffordable housing, (vi) discharged detainees; and (vii) lack of facilities in other locations. These causes result not just in the need for housing, but equally important, the ongoing need for support services. Further, these causes magnify two structural problems: one is the increasing inequities in our society reflected in the regressive impact of the inflation of the cost of essential needs, such as food, medical care, and housing. The other is systemic and institutional policies that have deprived people of color and other marginalized communities the opportunity to acquire the resources needed for home ownership, exacerbated by displacement that continues today in the gentrification of our neighborhoods.

Homelessness in Portland, Oregon and across many urban cities has been attributed to the Great Recession of 2008, rising housing prices, and stagnant wages. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable rent as paying no more than 30% of income for housing. In the Portland Metro area, 125,000 of the 349,000 renter households in 2015 had incomes that were below 50% median family income (MFI), half of which received no assistance.² A worker making less than \$22 per hour cannot afford to live

¹ Redden, J. (2019). Wheeler defends homeless response. Portland Tribune. May 16, 2019.

² Tapogna, J., Baron, M., Mastromonaco, R. (2018). Homelessness in the Portland Region: A Review of Trends, Causes, and the Outlook Ahead. EcoNorthwest for the Oregon Community Foundation. October 10, 2018.

in the Portland area, individuals making less are at risk of becoming homeless. The scope of the problem is vast with the 2018 Oregon Point-in-Time Count measuring 14,476 homeless individuals in the state, which is up 3.7% from 2017.³ Oregon is second only to California for having the highest percentage of unsheltered people: 8,925 people or 62% of Oregon's unhoused population are without shelter.⁴ One of the goals of this report is to provide ways to close all unsanctioned camps and other occupancy in public places by making shelter and regulated mental health and addiction centers available to all people experiencing homelessness in Oregon.

Focus is required on prevention, homeless financial support, and the construction of affordable housing, with immediate action taken to improve public hygiene and provide more shelter beds and mental health services.

³ Henry et al. (2018). The 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR). The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

⁴ Ibid.

2. OREGON HOMELESSNESS BY THE NUMBERS⁵

UNDERSTANDING THE CRISIS

- 4,015 -- Number of people experiencing homelessness according to the Point-in-Time (PIT) count in Portland-Multnomah County-Gresham in 2019⁶
- 38,000 -- Estimated true number of people experiencing homelessness when considering doubled-up living situations (Washington, Multnomah, Clackamas)
- 1,365 -- Number of publicly funded year-round emergency beds in Multnomah County in 2019
- 2,037 -- Number of people experiencing homelessness and unsheltered according to the 2019 Portland-Multnomah County-Gresham PIT
- 22% -- Increase in the number of people who are unsheltered in Multnomah County 2017–2019
- 15,800 -- Estimated number of people experiencing homelessness in Oregon in 2019 PIT
- 2 -- Oregon's rank in the nation for rate per thousand of unsheltered people among all those experiencing homelessness in 2018
- 92 -- Number of people experiencing homelessness who died on the street in 2018 in Multnomah County

HOUSING

- 50 -- Percentage of Portland renters burdened by paying over 30% of income on rent
- \$469,000 -- Median price for a Portland home in 2020
- 2 to 10 years -- Waitlist time for subsidized housing at Portland Housing Authority
- 29,000 -- Number of subsidized housing units needed in Portland area
- 155,000 -- Number of housing units needed in Oregon
- 12,388 -- Number of housing units needed in Oregon for the chronically homeless
- 1,300 -- Number of homes Portland's \$258.4M bond measure will produce
- 3,900 -- Number of homes Metro's \$652.8M bond measure will produce
- >200 -- Number of unsanctioned camps in Portland
- \$30,000 -- Estimated annual cost of homelessness per person (2017)
- \$15,000 -- Estimated annual cost to keep a low-income family from being homeless (2017)

⁵ Inspired by [Harper's Index](#). Harper's Magazine. Data supplied in body of report.

⁶ Discussion of some of the challenges of the formal Point-In-Time Count and huge discrepancy with other estimates can be found in Section 6.3 of the report.

January 2020

\$17,000 -- Annual cost per person of providing Permanent Supportive Housing (2017)

\$72 Million -- Yearly budget for the City of Portland and Multnomah County for the Joint Office of Homeless Services in 2020

MENTAL HEALTH

44th -- Oregon's national ranking on Mental Health America's 2018 list of effective mental health care (which assesses mental illness rates and access to treatment)

21-- Percentage of Oregonians who suffer from mental illness

71 -- Percentage of total individuals experiencing homelessness in the HUD count who self-report as suffering from at least one disability in 2019

38 -- Percentage of homeless individuals in Portland/Gresham/Multnomah who reported as suffering from mental illness in 2019

37 -- Percentage of homeless individuals in Portland/Gresham/Multnomah who reported as suffering from substance abuse in 2019

52 -- Percentage of all 2017 Portland Police arrests on persons experiencing homelessness

718 -- Number of arrested people experiencing homelessness who were sent to the State Psychiatric Hospital in 2018

\$1,342 -- Daily cost per person committed to the Oregon State Hospital

SOCIAL SUPPORT

31 -- Percentage of Oregonians who earn less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline (The 2019 200% Federal Poverty Guideline for a family of 4 is \$51,500/year)

16 -- Percentage of Oregonians who receive food assistance through SNAP, the current federal Food Stamp program

25 -- Percentage of Oregonians on Medicaid (1,000,000 people)

\$8.9 Billion -- Oregon's budget for Medicaid in 2018

3. RECOMMENDATIONS, IN BRIEF:

For details on each of the following, see Section 9: Recommendations, in Detail.

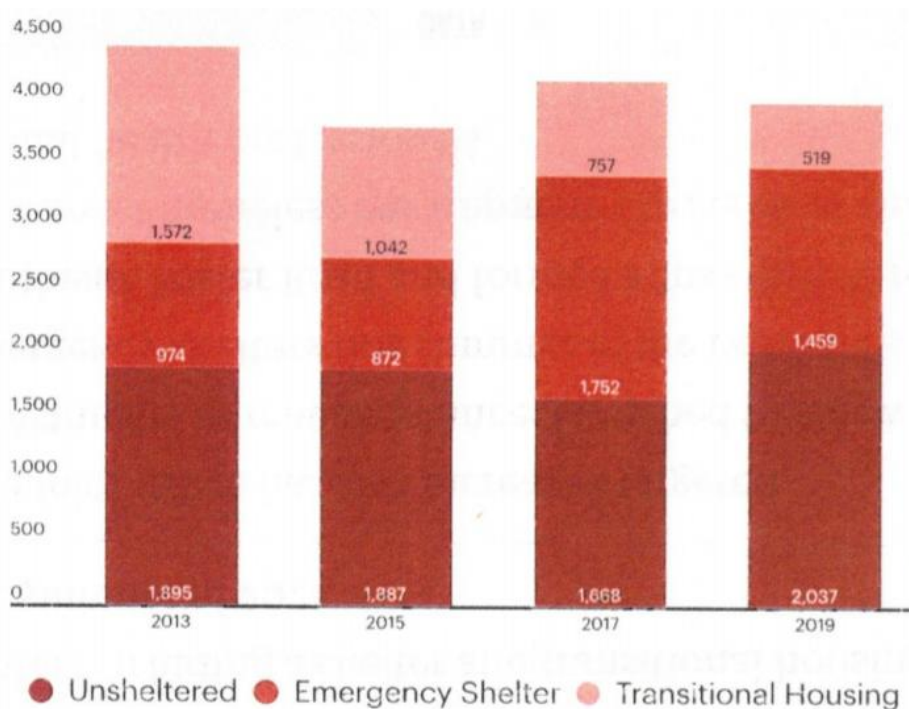
1. Educate the public that homelessness is, foremost, an economic event, not a choice.
2. Prevent or lessen homelessness by anticipating it and acting to intercept those at risk.
3. Build permanent housing with supportive services (PSH).
4. Support HomeTogether's campaign for an annual Portland area tax for support services and operating costs.
5. Provide 24,000 more units of affordable housing in the Metro area.
6. Prioritize support services for homeless families and children.
7. Restore the rate of HUD housing funding to 7% of the Federal Budget, like it was in 1977.
8. Add 2,400 emergency shelter beds in the Metro area.
9. Sanction more homeless camps, each of moderate size, to better promote safety and ease of management.
10. Provide immediate sanitation facilities for all sanctioned camps and public hygiene.
11. Close all unsanctioned campsites, consistent with ethical and legal constraints.
12. Eliminate the need for Public Sweeps of campsites.
13. Strengthen the Joint Office of Homeless Services.
14. Improve tracking of people experiencing homelessness and of the housing and support services provided them.
15. Interrupt and improve the criminal justice system's response to homelessness.
16. Expand the use of Outreach Teams.
17. Accelerate the housing strategy mandated by the 2019 legislature.
18. Use church parking and volunteered commercial open spaces for car camping for people who are experiencing homelessness.
19. Improve and expand mental health services.
20. Adopt a progressive tax on net worth to adequately fund solutions to the housing and homelessness crisis.
21. Create a statewide agency to oversee all efforts directed towards homelessness.
22. Accept personal responsibility for ending homelessness.

4. CURRENT STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE TRI-COUNTY METRO AREA AND OREGON

4.1. AT A GLANCE

A significant portion of data on persons experiencing homelessness comes from the annual PIT count. In 2019, 4,015 people were counted to be unsheltered, in an emergency shelter, or in transitional housing in the Portland/Gresham/Multnomah County region.⁷ Taking a closer look at special populations will help to inform appropriate interventions.

PIT Counts from 2013-2019



NOTE: Conforms to homelessness as defined by U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD).

Figure 1: The biannual PIT homelessness count in Portland, Gresham, and Multnomah County fell by 3.9% in 2019, but those living unsheltered rose by 22.1%.⁸

⁷ Joint Office of Homelessness Services. (2019). 2019 Point-in-Time Count: Count of Homelessness in Portland/Gresham/Multnomah County, Oregon.

⁸ Sawyer, B. (2019). [Portland's homeless crisis gets better – and worse](#). August 23, 2019. Portland Business Journal.

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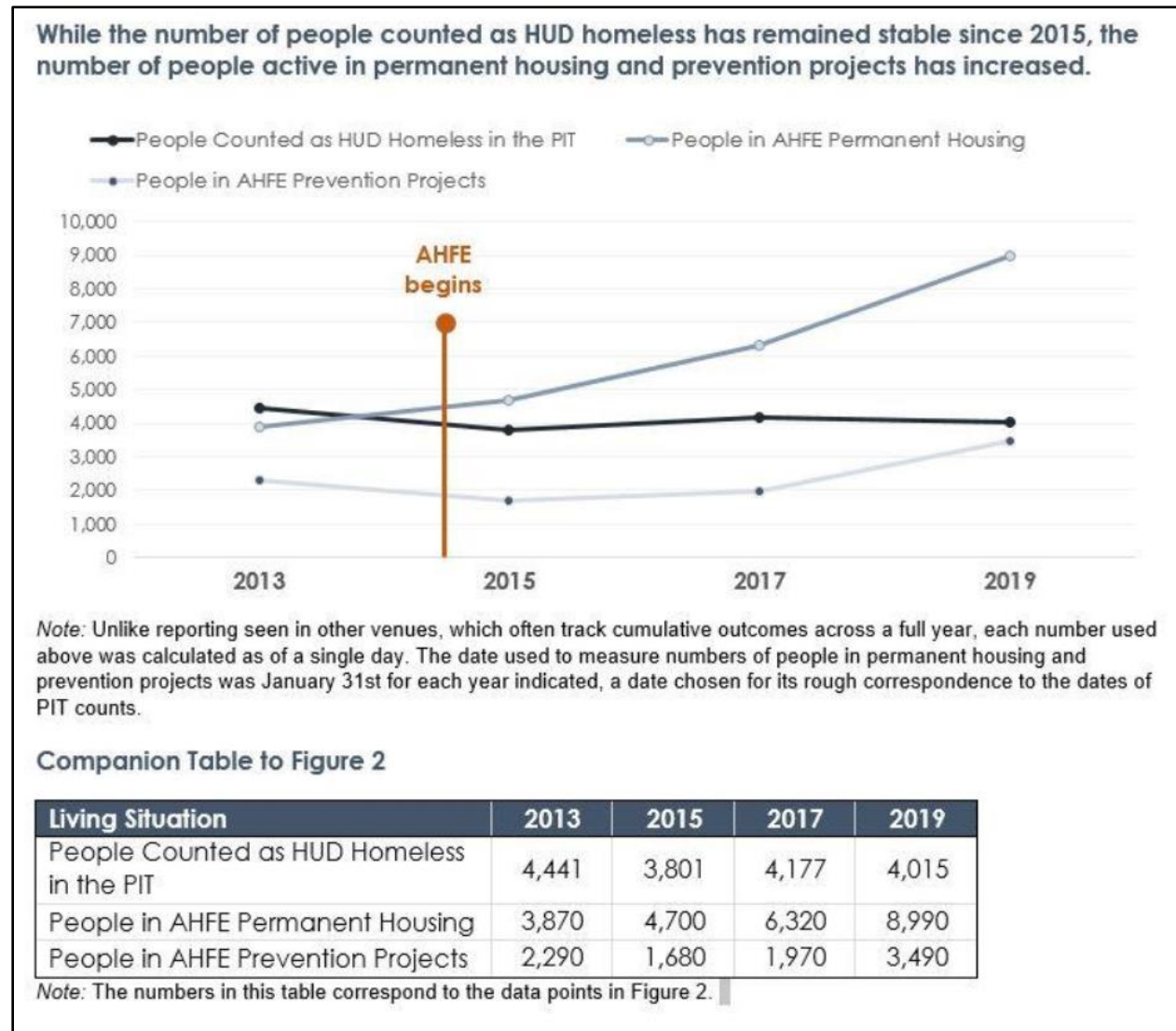


Figure 2: While there was a decrease in the PIT count, significantly more people were served in 2019 than previous years. AHFE marks the start of A Home for Everyone. Without the concerted efforts and funding over the last year, the Portland Metro area would likely have seen much higher rates of homelessness.⁹

4.2. REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS POINT TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Understanding the diverse demographics of people experiencing homelessness is essential for developing successful prevention strategies, appropriate services, and sufficient resources. The

⁹ Joint Office of Homeless Services. (2019). [NEWS RELEASE: Overall homelessness number falls in 2019 despite tough housing market – but most extensive street count yet finds more without shelter](#). Multnomah County News. August 1, 2019.

2019 PIT show that more people report being unsheltered, more people are experiencing chronic homelessness, and people of color are disproportionately experiencing homelessness.¹⁰

4.2.1. Unsheltered People Represent Large Population of Total Homeless Population

In Oregon 2018, nearly 67% of people experiencing homelessness were unsheltered, according to the HUD PIT count.¹¹ Oregon had the second highest percentage in the country. In Multnomah County, 2,037 people slept unsheltered in January 2019 (likely, higher in summer).

EXHIBIT 2.6: States with the Highest and Lowest Rates of Unsheltered Homeless Individuals, By State, 2018



Figure 3: In Oregon, nearly 67% of people experiencing homelessness are unsheltered.¹²

4.2.2. Chronic Homelessness

There has been an increase in chronic homelessness in Multnomah County in 2019, defined as having at least one disabling condition and having experienced homelessness for a year or more.¹³ About 44% of homeless individuals in Multnomah County are chronically homeless (1,769 people).¹⁴ This represents a 37.1% increase compared to 2017. Chronically homeless persons represented 66.5% of those who were unsheltered on the night of the count.¹⁵

Predictors of chronic homelessness include: arrests within the past two years, substance abuse, high-risk jail classification, heart disease diagnosis, two or more outpatient mental health visits, emergency inpatient admissions, and two or more emergency medical service encounters.¹⁶

Permanent supportive housing is the recommended best-practice for supporting chronically homeless individuals. The Joint Office of Homeless Services state that there are significant unmet needs for the chronically homeless, with 1,037 chronically homeless people on the Supportive Housing Coordinated Access List.¹⁷ They are assigned housing on the basis of "severity of vulnerability."

¹⁰ Joint Office of Homelessness Services. (2019). 2019 Point-in-Time Count.

¹¹ Henry et al. (2018).

¹² Henry et al. (2018).

¹³ Joint Office of Homelessness Services. (2019). 2019 Point-in-Time Count.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Tapogna et al. (2018).

¹⁷ City of Portland & Multnomah County. (2018). [Smarter, Together: Shared Strategies on Homelessness Continue to Produce Unprecedented Results](#). Joint Office of Homeless Services Work Session. September 11, 2018.

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Seventy-one percent of respondents to the PIT count self-reported having a disabling condition, a 14% increase from 2017.¹⁸ Over 55% of people with a disabling condition were unsheltered. Among the unsheltered population 41% (839) self-identified as having a mental illness, and 45.6% (929) as suffering from substance abuse.

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), a national homeless support group, estimates that Oregon needs 12,388 units of housing to meet the needs of the chronically homeless, including populations facing barriers to stable housing such as seniors, those being released from prison and jail, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, transition-age youth, people with substance use disorders, and those with serious and persistent mental illness.¹⁹

Chronically Homeless	Unsheltered	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Total
Yes	1,354 (66.5%)	415 (28.4%)	0 (0%)	1,769 (44.1%)
No	443 (21.7%)	0 (0%)	519 (100%)	962 (24%)
Unknown	240 (11.8%)	1,044 (71.6%)	0 (0%)	1,284 (32%)
Total	2,037	1,459	519	4,015

Note: Questions 5, 6, 6a, & 14 on the [Street Count Survey](#) contribute to the determination of chronic homeless status.

Figure 4: HUD Homeless Population by Chronic Homelessness Status and Living Situation²⁰

4.2.3. Children and Youth are Especially Vulnerable to Homelessness

Oregon ranked as one of the worst states in the country for rates of unhoused children and youth in 2018. In 2018, Oregon was the state with the highest rate of unsheltered families with children among those experiencing homelessness. The number of PIT count homeless families with children in Multnomah County dropped 50% in 2019, and the number of families with children living unsheltered dropped 84%.²¹ However, this does not include the “doubled-up” estimate. The Oregon Department of Education estimated that 23,000 children were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in the 2016-2017 school year.²² This number has increased for four consecutive years and is up 5.6% from the 2015-2016 year.²³ 40% of formerly homeless youth had dropped out in middle and high school.²⁴

¹⁸ Krishnan et al. (2017).

¹⁹ Brown et al. (2018).

²⁰ Joint Office of Homelessness Services. (2019). 2019 Point-in-Time Count.

²¹ Joint Office of Homelessness Services. (2019). 2019 Point-in-Time Count.

²² Achen, P. (2018). Oregon ranks first for homeless youth. Portland Tribune. August 8, 2018.

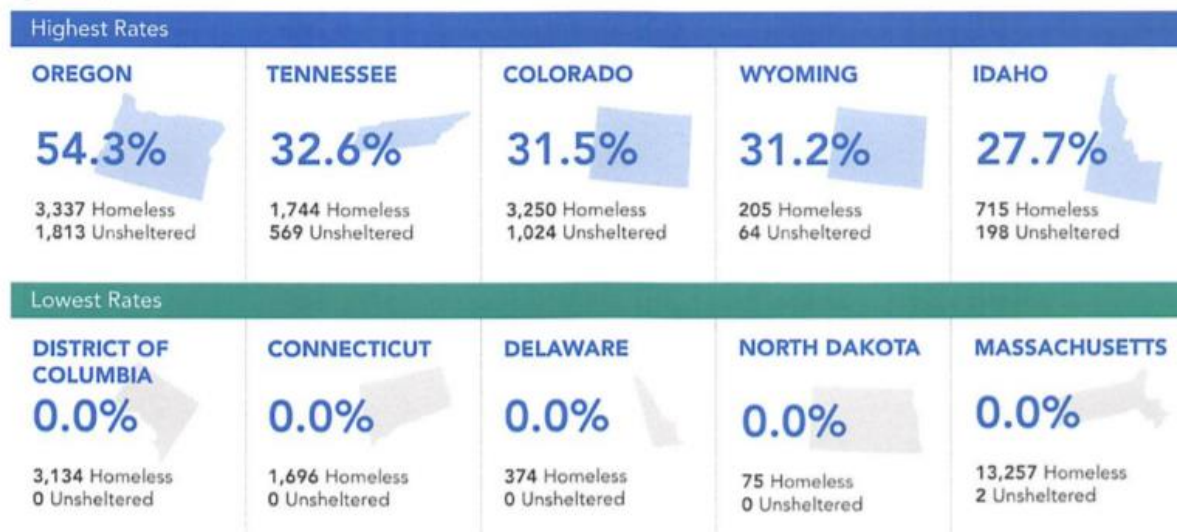
²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

Oregon also has a broken foster care system. 40-50% of individuals who matriculate out of the foster care system become homeless within eighteen months.²⁵ Oregon is first in the nation for rate of homeless youth, 10th in the nation for percentage of foster care placements (placement due to housing has been a major contributing factor), and 12th in the ratio of disadvantaged due to poverty, food insecurity, and abuse.²⁶

HUD has shown that long-term, conventional housing subsidies provide the most protection from homelessness for families.²⁷ While rapid rehousing programs have shown some promise, the Joint Office of Homeless Service acknowledges that there is an unmet need, with 1,080 families in the queue for rapid rehousing and supportive housing.²⁸ The overall number of families that can be housed by the whole system is diminishing, adding extra stress. The failure to house families was also seen in the failure of the Human Solutions Emergency Shelter funded by the Joint Office. It overflowed from 150 beds to 468 and the proposed budget of \$2 million for the 2017-18 biennium already surpassed \$3.5 million by the first November. Housing one family costs \$3,318/month in motel or \$2,265/month in a Human Solutions shelter; whereas it cost \$1,800/month for an average two-bedroom apartment in Portland.²⁹

EXHIBIT 3.7: Highest and Lowest Rates of Unsheltered People in Families with Children By State, 2018



Note: Excludes Puerto Rico and U.S. territories.

Figure 5: 2018 National Point-in-Time Count exhibiting Oregon as a state with the highest rate of unsheltered people in families with children³⁰

²⁵ Citizens Crime Commission. (2019).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Tapogna et al. (2018).

²⁸ City of Portland & Multnomah County. (2018). Smarter, Together.

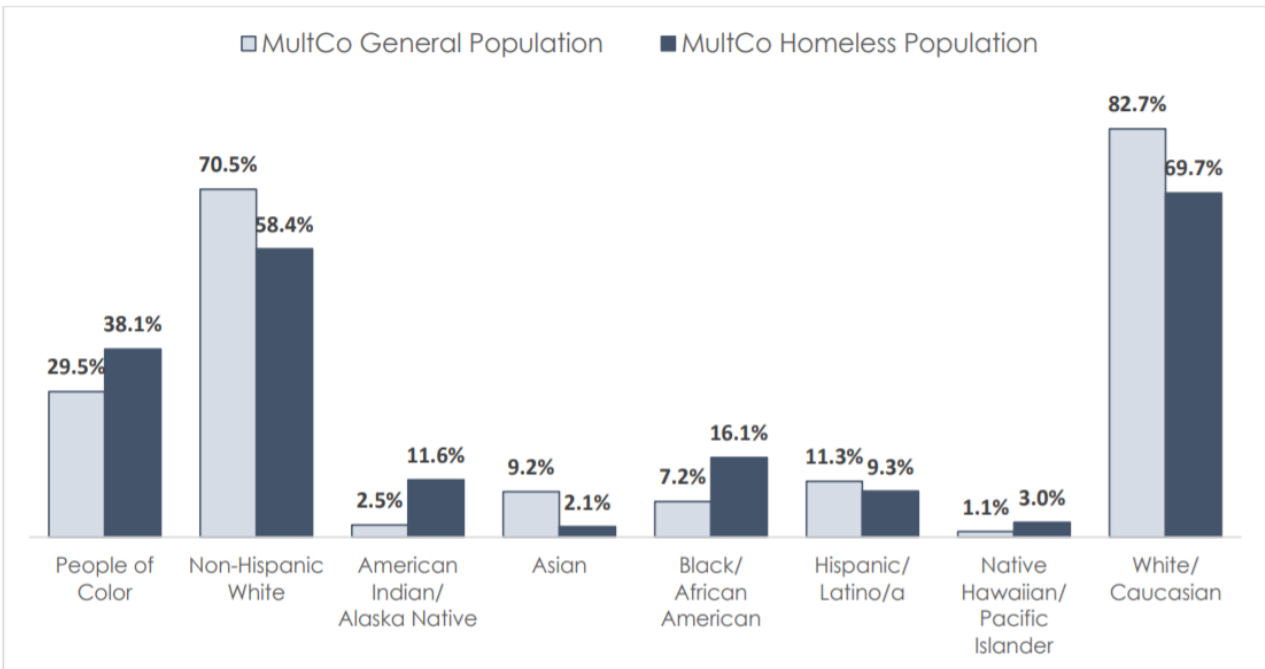
²⁹ Templeton, A. (2018). [How Portland tried, and failed, to provide a bed for all its homeless children.](#) Oregon Public Broadcasting. March 13, 2018.

³⁰ Henry et al. (2018).

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4.2.4. Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations are Disproportionately Experiencing Homelessness

The Multnomah County 2019 PIT count shows that racial disparities persist. Although people of color makeup 29.5% of the population, they represent 38.1% of the homeless population.³¹ The Black/African American share of the homeless population is 16.1%, compared to 7.2% of the general population. A Home for Everyone (AHFE) is prioritizing addressing racial disparities in chronic homelessness.



Note: Percentages for the Multnomah County general population were obtained from US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (2013-2017).

Figure 6: Multiple Communities of Color continue to be overrepresented in the HUD homeless population in Multnomah County³²

4.2.5. Domestic Violence Survivors Need Safe and Immediate Housing Services

In the Multnomah County, 36% of people experiencing homelessness reported experiencing domestic violence.³³ A one-day snapshot census of domestic violence programs, completed in September 2017 by the National Network to End Domestic Violence, reported that, in Oregon, 53% of all domestic violence services were for housing. Oregon currently does not provide enough housing assistance to meet the needs of survivors and their children.³⁴

³¹ Joint Office of Homelessness Services. (2019). 2019 Point-in-Time Count.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Brown et al. (2018).

Table 26: HUD Homeless Adults by Domestic Violence Experience and Living Situation

Ever Experienced Domestic Violence?	Unsheltered	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Total
Yes	874 (43%)	398 (31.2%)	110 (22%)	1,382 (36.3%)
No	68 (3.3%)	744 (58.4%)	370 (74.1%)	1,182 (31.1%)
Unknown	1,089 (53.6%)	133 (10.4%)	19 (3.8%)	1,241 (32.6%)
Total adults	2,031	1,275	499	3,805

Note: Question – “[Ask if 18 years or older] Have you experienced domestic violence (physical/emotional/verbal DV) in current or past relationships?”

- Includes only adults who reported having experienced domestic violence.

These results should be viewed with caution, given the overall 32.6% unknown response rate for the question.

Figure 7: HUD Homeless Adults by Domestic Violence Experience and Living Situation³⁵

Table 27: HUD Homeless Adults with Experience of Domestic Violence by Fleeing Status

Currently Fleeing DV?	Number (Percent)
Yes	383 (27.7%)
No	849 (61.4%)
Unknown	150 (10.9%)
Total adults who have experienced DV	1,382

Note: Question – “Are you currently fleeing from DV?”

Figure 8: Multnomah County Point-in-Time Domestic Violence³⁶

³⁵Joint Office of Homelessness Services. (2019). 2019 Point-in-Time Count.

³⁶Joint Office of Homelessness Services. (2019). 2019 Point-in-Time Count.

4.2.6. Seniors Face Financial Insecurity

Seniors are at increased risk of financial insecurity, loss of affordable housing, and homelessness. Sixty-one percent of seniors rely on Social Security for half of their income and one in four seniors rely on it for 90% of income.³⁷ Social security checks average \$735/month, yet the cost of medical care has gone up 1.5% from 2016 to 2017, debt among retirees increased 48% between 2003 and 2015, and mean retirement account savings has not reached pre-recession levels.³⁸ ³⁹ This is worrisome as 10,000 Americans turn 65 years old every day and 29% report having no retirement savings or pension. In the Portland/Gresham/Multnomah County area, there is a significant aging trend in the HUD homeless population between 2017 and 2019, with an 11.7% change in the 55+ population and 75% change in the 70+ population.⁴⁰

Age Group	2017	2019	% Change
Under 18	382 (9.1%)	192 (4.8%)	-49.7%
18-24	335 (8%)	284 (7.1%)	-15.2%
25-54	2,595 (62.1%)	2,582 (64.3%)	-0.5%
55-69	772 (18.5%)	862 (21.5%)	11.7%
70+	44 (1.1%)	77 (1.9%)	75.0%
Unknown	49 (1.2%)	18 (0.4%)	-63.3%
Total	4,177	4,015	-3.9%

Figure 9: Change over Time, HUD Homeless Population by Age Group⁴¹

³⁷ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2019). Policy Basics: Top Ten Facts about Social Security. August 14, 2019.

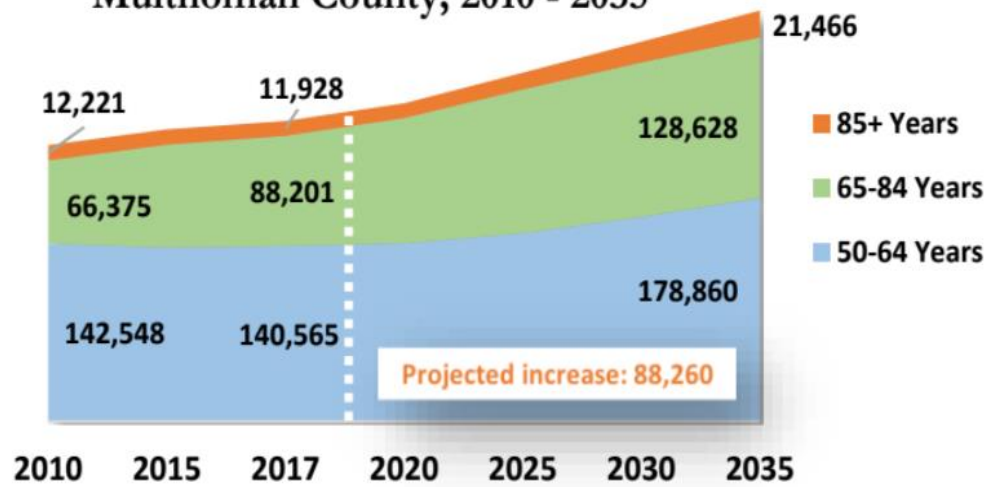
³⁸ Vespa, M. (2017). 'Silver tsunami' leaving more seniors on Portland's streets, experts say. KGW. November 1, 2017.

³⁹ Associated Press. (2017). [Social Security benefits will get a 2% bump in 2018](#).

⁴⁰ Joint Office of Homelessness Services. (2019). 2019 Point-in-Time Count.

⁴¹ Joint Office of Homelessness Services. (2019). 2019 Point-in-Time Count.

Population Growth and Projections, Age 50 and Up Multnomah County, 2010 - 2035



Source: Population Research Center, Portland State University, July 1, 2017

Figure 10: Population Growth and Projections for Populations Aged 50+ in Multnomah County, 2010-2035⁴²

4.3. PROBLEMS WITH POINT-IN-TIME DATA AND NEED FOR CENTRALIZED RECORD KEEPING

One of the biggest challenges of creating effective policy on homelessness is the significant amount of incomplete or missing data. It is widely agreed that the PIT does not capture the full scope of people experiencing homelessness. The PIT is organized by HUD and is a snapshot of individuals in emergency shelter, transitional housing, or unsheltered on a single night in January or February. Community efforts to get an accurate count of homelessness are not uniform across the country.⁴³ Barriers for accurate assessment include sleeping in unknown locations, language, refusal to participate, individuals not using mainstream services, and persons living doubled-up with friends or family. Nationally and regionally, other HUD PIT system shortfalls include variance in counting methods across regions, the inability to count hard-to-locate populations, the reliance on self-reported conditions, and changes in housing classifications which can change homeless count categories.⁴⁴ The Homelessness Research and Action Collaborative Center (HRAC), based out of Portland State University, specifically addresses these concerns in their 2019 report.⁴⁵ When including the doubled-up population, the results are startling: 38,000 people experienced homelessness in the tri-county area in 2017.⁴⁶

⁴² Chanay et al. (2018).

⁴³ Tapogna et al. (2018).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Zapata et al. (2019).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

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4.3.1. Examples of Inconsistent Counts

In 2017, the estimated doubled-up population in Multnomah County was 9,522, calculated by the number of children experiencing homelessness multiplied by the average family size.^{47 48} The combined state PIT and doubled-up estimate from HRAC (2019) totaled to an estimated 25,000 people experiencing homelessness in 2017 in Multnomah County.⁴⁹ While the PIT reported 382 homeless children in Multnomah County, the Oregon Department of Education counted 4,960 homeless children.^{50 51} The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty Estimates that the number of homeless individuals could be 2.5 to 10.2 times greater than what the PIT reports. The Portland Police Bureau arrested 4,437 homeless individuals, which is higher than the Multnomah County PIT count of 4,177 individuals surveyed.⁵² Transition Projects, alone, had 4,200 individuals in shelters in 2017.

4.3.2. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

The Home for Everyone work group used HUD's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data to estimate 9,650 people experiencing homelessness in 2013, 2.17 times more than the PIT count for that time period.⁵³ This difference can be partly attributed to differences in individuals fluctuating in and out of homelessness within the course of a year, though it suggests the PIT does not fully capture the extent of those receiving services. HMIS system shortfalls include loss of contact, lack of disaggregate and aggregate totals of services rendered, and lack of rates of successful outcomes. As a response to the audit by the Multnomah County Auditor, the 2018 memorandum from the Joint Office of Homeless Services will jointly convene with the Portland Housing Bureau data team and assess data input, data alignment, and outcomes reporting.⁵⁴

4.4. HEALTH RISKS FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Unintentional injuries among the houseless population are a leading cause of morbidity and mortality from injuries such as falls, being struck by a motor vehicle, and drug overdose. Exposure to the elements, hot or cold weather, is also a major contributing factor.⁵⁵ A study on Emergency Department (ED) visits and hospitalizations among unhoused people with Medicaid showed that one third of the population had at least one hospitalization and two-thirds had

⁴⁷ Krishnan et al. (2017).

⁴⁸ Zapata et al. (2019).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Chanay et al. (2018).

⁵¹ Zapata et al. (2019).

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Tapogna et al. (2018).

⁵⁴ Jolin M. (2018). [Memorandum: Response to Audit of Joint Office of Homeless Services.](#)

⁵⁵ Walters J., Zlot, A., & Lewis, P. (2018). [Domicile Unknown: Review of deaths among people experiencing homelessness in Multnomah County in 2017.](#)

one or more ED visits. Homeless individuals with co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders were at greatest risk for frequent hospitalizations and ED visits.⁵⁶

There is a higher rate of mortality among people experiencing homelessness as compared to the general population. “Domicile Unknown” is a review completed by the Multnomah County Health Department supported by Oregon State Medical Examiner and Multnomah County Medical Examiner offices. They investigate all suspicious or unattended deaths and review cases in which people were likely homeless. During 2017, 79 people without an address or housing of their own died in Multnomah County. In 2018 homeless deaths had jumped to 92.⁵⁷ Since 2011, 438 people experiencing homelessness have died. The number of actual deaths is likely higher because the tally only captures those who died in hospitals. In 2017, there was a severe winter and 58% of the Domicile Unknown deaths occurred between October and March, including five people who died of hypothermia in January 2017. Drugs or alcohol caused or contributed to more than half of the deaths in 2017 with methamphetamine then opioids being lead contributors.⁵⁸

4.5. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS

Oregonians rank poorly in behavioral health services when compared to the rest of the nation. The nonprofit, Mental Health America, recently ranked Oregon the worst in the country for mental illness rates and access to mental health services.⁵⁹ In a scathing decision in March 2019, a federal judge in Northern California ruled that a unit of United Health Group, the giant health insurer, had created internal policies aimed at effectively discriminating against patients with mental health and substance abuse disorders to save money, and found it monetarily liable for failing to provide necessary medical services.

Commercial insurers, as well as Medicare and Medicaid, notwithstanding federal law requiring parity of medical and mental health treatments, are permitted to outsource (or “carve out”) to for-profit companies, like United Health Group, for mental health services, and ostensibly avoid the parity requirement. The health system’s failure to provide accessible and adequate mental health services has been a major driver in growing homelessness, especially chronic homelessness. In 1955, there were 558,000 individuals in mental health hospitals but in 1998 there were only 60,000.⁶⁰ The National Alliance on Mental Illness show that one in five adults in the United States have some type of mental illness, and about one in twenty have serious

⁵⁶ Lin, W. C., Bharel, M., Zhang, J., O'Connell, E., & Clark, R. E. (2015). Frequent Emergency Department Visits and Hospitalizations Among Homeless People with Medicaid: Implications for Medicaid Expansion. *American journal of public health, 105 Suppl 5*, S716-22.

⁵⁷ Peel, S. (2019). [Multnomah County's yearly report on homeless deaths show rising numbers of meth related fatalities](#). Willamette Week. October 16, 2019.

⁵⁸ Walters et al. (2018).

⁵⁹ Mental Health America. (2017). 2017 State of Mental Health in America - Ranking the States. Retrieved from <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/issues/2017-state-mental-health-america-ranking-states>

⁶⁰ Ibid.

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mental illness.⁶¹ 77% of U.S. counties are underserved, and rural, youth, and geriatric populations are particularly under-resourced.⁶² The most common illnesses and health problems that cause homelessness are major mental illnesses, especially chronic schizophrenia.⁶³

Reports state that there are dismal numbers of behavioral health practitioners, leading to long wait times and reduced quality of care. Oregon, like the rest of the country, has a severe shortage of psychiatrists, reporting fewer than ten per 10,000 population.⁶⁴

One reason for diminishing numbers of mental health practitioners is the low reimbursement from all insurance: Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance. Psychiatric services have not been reimbursed in the same way as other medical services, partially due to the stigma around mental health.⁶⁵ In fact, in 2016, \$194.4 billion was spent nationally on mental illness, which is less than 6% of the total healthcare expenditures of \$3.3 trillion.⁶⁶ The actual percentage of total health care that is spent on behavioral health has declined since health care reform.

	2013-2015	2015-2017	2017-2019
Total Behavioral Health Spending	\$2,278,288,489	\$2,514,026,280	\$ 2,811,601,916
Total Health Spending	\$12,055,899,647	\$14,427,251,539	\$16,333,548,663
Behavioral Health as a % of Total	18.90%	17.43%	17.21%

Oregon Health Care Authority Expenditures, 2013-2019⁶⁰

Figure 11: Oregon Health Care Authority Expenditures - Behavioral health spending has decreased compared to overall healthcare expenditures⁶⁷

Oregon State Senator, Floyd Prozanski, has been seeking to expand Oregon's laws to permit involuntary commitment in cases of severe behavioral infirmity to include "that which is in the best interest of the patient." The State of Washington has adopted comprehensive legislation for the treatment of chronic behavioral disorders.⁶⁸ Its findings state,

...persons with mental disorders, chemical dependency disorders, or co-occurring mental and substance abuse disorders are disproportionately more likely to be confined in a correctional institution, become homeless, become involved with child protective services or involved in a dependency proceeding, or lose

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Health Care for Homeless People. (1988). [Homelessness, Health, and Human Needs](#). Washington (DC): National Academies Press. Health Problems of Homeless People.

⁶⁴ Romero, M. (2019). [Psychiatrist shortage is a national crisis as need for mental health care grows](#). KGW8. July 31, 2019.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Citizens Crime Commission. (2019).

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ RCW 71.05

those state and federal benefits to which they may be entitled as a result of their disorder. The legislature finds that prior state policy of addressing mental health and chemical dependency in isolation from each other has not been cost-effective and has often resulted in longer-term, more costly treatment that may be less effective over time. The legislature finds that a substantial number of persons have co-occurring mental and substance abuse disorders and that identification and integrated treatment of co-occurring disorders is critical to successful outcomes and recovery.⁶⁹

The 2019 Legislature did not deal directly with the problem, but it appropriated \$10+ million and created a People's Access to Community-Based Treatment, Supports and Services Grant Review Committee to administer the money. A subcommittee is to be established and is charged with developing outcome measures or evaluation tools for programs receiving grants under the Improving People's Access to Community-Based Treatment, Supports and Services Program; and establishing a statewide system for tracking.⁷⁰

4.6. EXPECTED INCREASES IN HOMELESSNESS

The EcoNorthwest (2018) study predicts the seven-county homeless count to increase from 6,597 in 2017 to 8,297 in 2022.⁷¹ The rate is expected to increase to 31.9 per 10,000 residents by 2022 and is driven by a 14% increase in median rents through 2022.⁷² They claim that there are currently 56,000 individuals in Oregon who are vulnerable to homelessness based on housing affordability and lack of safety nets.⁷³

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ 2019 Or. Laws Ch. 563, <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2019R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/SB973/Enrolled> (accessed Jan. 6, 2020)

⁷¹ Tapogna et al. (2018).

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Tapogna, J., & Baron, M. (2019). Homelessness in Oregon: A Review of Trends, Causes, and Policy Options. EcoNorthwest for the Oregon Community Foundation. March 2019.

5. HOW DID WE GET HERE?

5.1. LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS A NATIONAL ISSUE, ESPECIALLY ACUTE ON THE WEST COAST

The United States is amid an affordable housing crisis. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, rents are rising faster than renters' incomes and record-breaking numbers of families can no longer afford housing.⁷⁴ There is a national shortage of 7 million homes affordable and available to the lowest-income renters, and fewer than four affordable and available rental homes exist for every 10 deeply poor families.⁷⁵ Eleven million renters pay more than half of their incomes on rent, making them severely housing cost-burdened.⁷⁶ No state has an adequate supply of affordable housing, with the West Coast having the most severe deficiencies.

The modern state of affordable housing lies in stark contrast to the late 1970s, when there was three times the amount of federal spending on housing assistance programs and a surplus of affordable homes for the lowest income people.⁷⁷ Between 1980 and 1990, the number of low-income households receiving federal rental assistance dropped by more than half.⁷⁸ Since 1995, federal funding for low-income housing assistance has fallen by over 20% in both the share of all non-defense discretionary spending and as a share of the gross domestic product.⁷⁹ The role of spending for housing has systematically been shifted to state and local government.

The Citizens Crime Commission states,

...federal spending on housing has shrunk from nearly eight percent of the budget to barely over one percent, a gap that, much like the gap in providing services for the mentally ill, has never been filled by states or localities.⁸⁰

Despite having far deeper pockets, the federal government now spends less per homeless person⁸¹ than the city of San Francisco.⁸² Oregon Congressman Earl Blumenauer recently

⁷⁴ Yentel, D. (2019). [The Affordable Home Crisis Continues, But Bold New Plans May Help](#). CityLab. March 14, 2019.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ruben, B. A., Wright, J. D., & Devine, J. A. (1992). [Unhousing the Urban Poor: The Reagan Legacy](#). *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 19, 111-147.

⁷⁹ Citizens Crime Commission. (2019). Homelessness in Portland: A Meta-analysis and Recommendations for Success.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2019). [Community planning and development homeless assistance grants](#). 2019 Summary statement and initiatives.

⁸² Knight, H. (2018). [What it really costs to help the homeless. And how business can do more](#). San Francisco Chronicle. August 24, 2018.

published a report calling on the federal government to reinvest in public housing, homelessness, renter relief, equitable home ownership, and fair housing.⁸³ The report explains how the federal government played an active role in housing policy and assistance throughout United States history, especially when supporting white families. Federal housing assistance began to decline under Nixon, as poverty rates declined for white families. However, many communities of color remained in poverty and were left with minimal support and limited opportunity for home ownership. The subsequent decades and administrations systematically decreased federal housing assistance that shifted focus from the construction of affordable housing to rental assistance, which is less impactful. Decades of decreased federal support has left many families struggling to find safe, healthy, and adequate housing and financial stability, with communities of color disproportionately affected. Blumenauer clearly summarizes that,

These deliberate choices led us to today's crisis: middle class families struggling to buy their first home, renters who can barely make rent, chronic homelessness, and lingering effects of centuries of institutionalized racism.⁸⁴

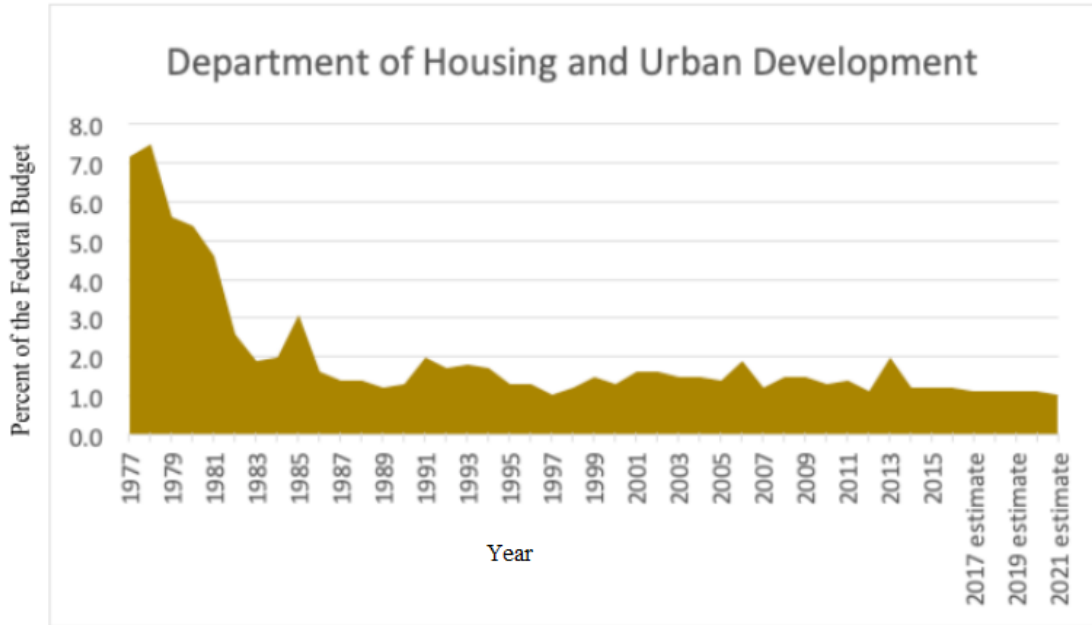
Most housing assistance in the U.S. goes to homeowners through income tax deductions. Homeowners received \$77 billion in home mortgage deductions in 2016 compared to \$41 billion for low-income assistance.⁸⁵

⁸³ Blumenauer, E. (2019). [Locked Out: Reversing Federal Housing Failures and Unlocking Opportunity](#). The Office of Earl Blumenauer.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Small, R. (2018). [You are here: A snapshot of greater Portland's need for affordable homes](#). Metro. April 24, 2018.

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Distribution of Budget Authority by Agency: Housing and Urban Development, 1977-2021⁸⁶

Figure 12: Decline in HUD Funding since 1977. Federal spending on housing has shrunk from nearly 8% of the federal budget to just over 1% since the 1970s. The gap in funding has never been filled by states or local government.⁸⁶

Oregon is one of the states where deficiencies in affordable housing is most pervasive. For every hundred extremely low-income renter households, there are only twenty-eight affordable and available homes. Oregon represents a hotspot for loss of affordable housing and, subsequently, has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the country. Ultimately, a comprehensive solution will require substantial support from the federal government in addition to state, local, and private intervention.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

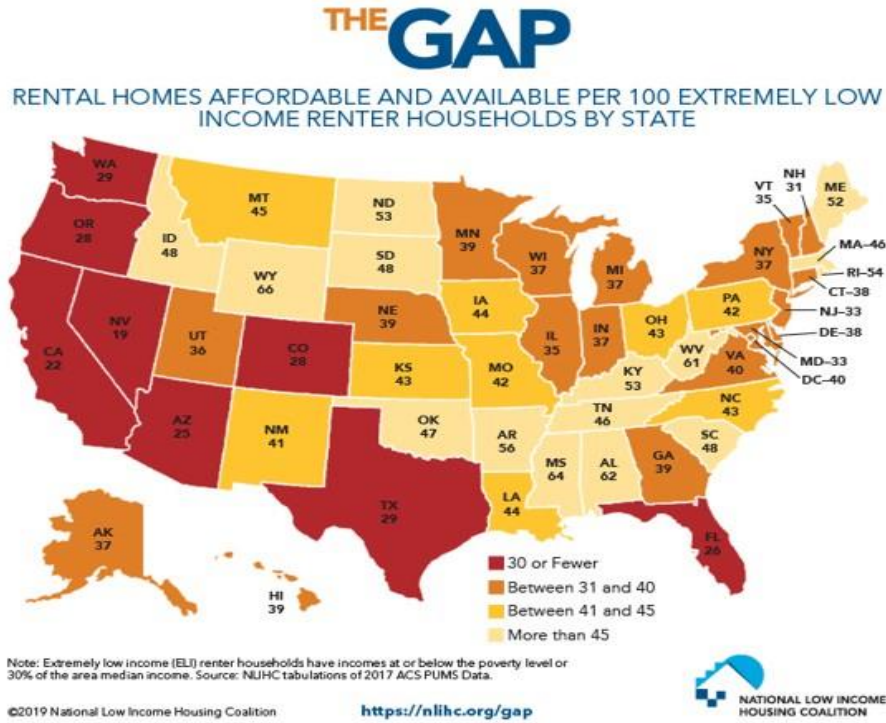


Figure 13: For every 100 extremely low income rent households, there are only 28 affordable and available homes in Oregon

EXHIBIT 2.5: Estimates of Homeless Individuals
By State, 2018

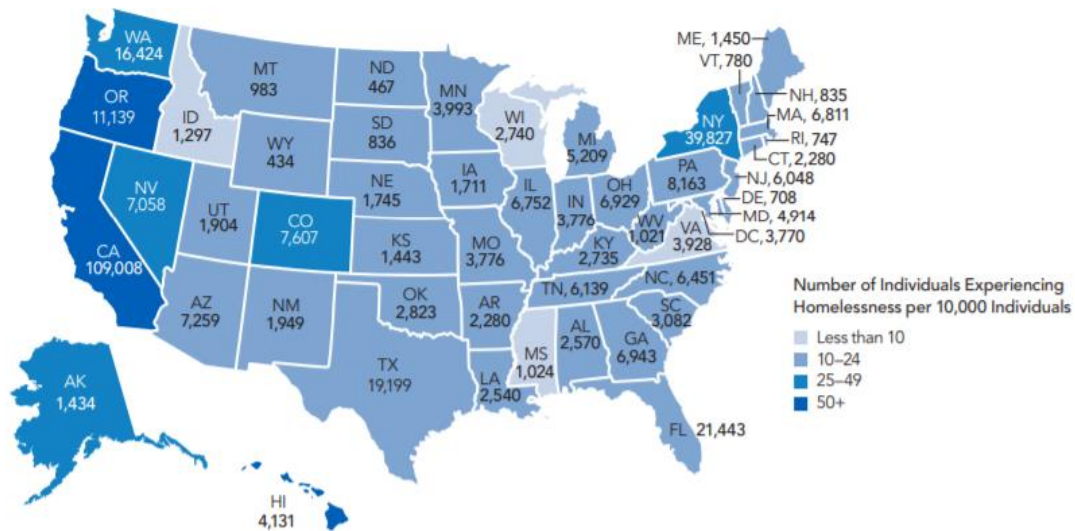


Figure 14: Oregon has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the country⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Henry et al. (2018).

5.2. POPULATION AND ECONOMIC CHANGES HAVE INCREASED COMPETITION FOR JOBS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN OREGON

Population and economic changes in the last decade have been significant drivers of homelessness in Oregon. By 2017, the population of Multnomah County had risen by 67,666 since 2010, driven by increased net migration into the city. Net migration from 2010 to 2017 was 40,290 individuals. Natural increase in Multnomah County totaled 27,376 individuals.⁸⁸ Following the increase in population, was an increase in job polarization.⁸⁹ Fast-growth industries (health, business, hospitality) are rising compared to slow-growth industries like manufacturing. Meanwhile, the number of high and low-wage jobs has finally surpassed levels prior to the Great Recession, while middle-income jobs have not recovered 10 years later.

The self-sufficiency standard for Multnomah County in 2017 was set by Worksystems Inc., a nonprofit agency, at \$31.57/hour, but the minimum wage is \$12.50. The median wage of all occupations in Multnomah County, \$20.35, does not meet the sufficiency standard. From 2011 to 2015, the change in number of households in Portland earning over \$100,000/year increased over 100%, showing increasing disparities among Portland's economic populations.⁹⁰ With Portland-area rents having risen 20 times faster than area median income a person making the area median income⁹¹ of Portland would have to spend 60% of their income on rent to afford a studio apartment.

As people migrate to urban centers such as Portland, housing prices increase rapidly, leading to gentrification, displacement, and increased risk of homelessness. In New York City, studies suggest that gentrification acts as "poverty destabilization" in which "the poor are forced to compete with the poorest of the poor, who are subsequently forced into homelessness."⁹² Those receiving only disability support or social security benefits are at risk of not being able to afford rent. More than 18,000 people in Multnomah County rely on long-term federal disability checks that top out at \$735 per month.⁹³ In 2018, Social Security benefits received a 2% bump, topping out at \$1,283 a month, or about \$15,396 a year.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ Chanay et al. (2018).

⁸⁹ Lehner, J. (2017). [Oregon's Population Growth](#). Oregon Office of Economic Analysis. November 16, 2017.

⁹⁰ Chanay et al. (2018).

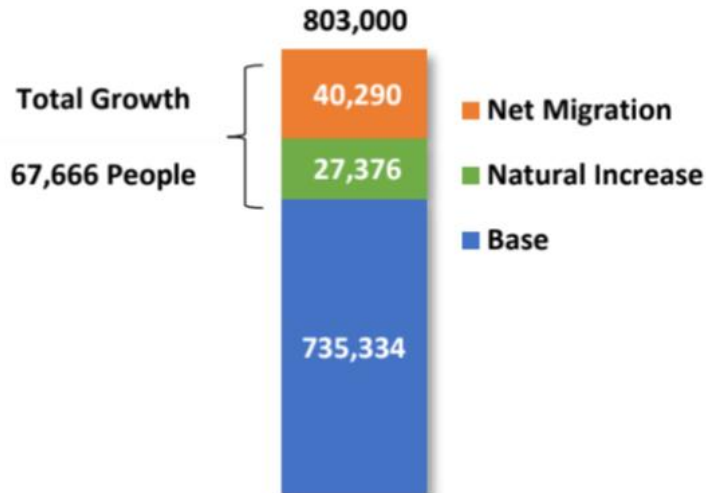
⁹¹ Currently \$30,800. Portland Housing Bureau. (2019). 2019 AMI Rents. Retrieved from <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/phb/article/731546>.

⁹² Citizens Crime Commission. (2019).

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Associated Press. (2017). [Social Security benefits will get a 2% bump in 2018](#). OregonLive. October 13, 2017.

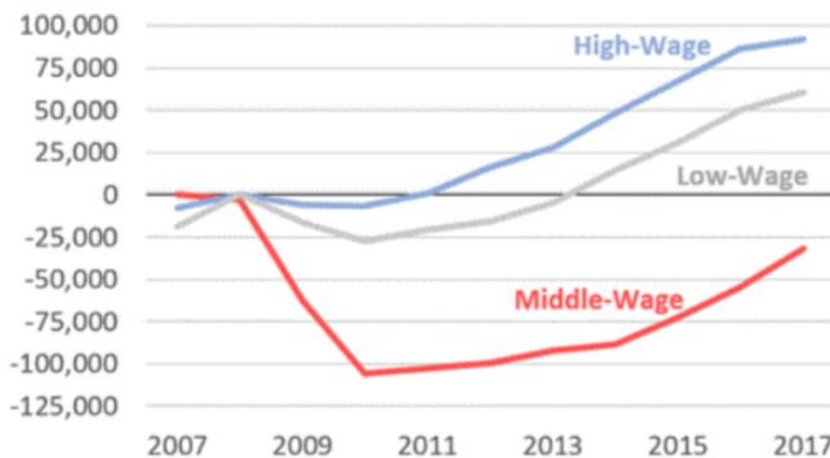
Multnomah County Population Change, 2010 - 2017



Source: PSU, Population Research Center, Oregon Annual Population Report, 2017

Figure 15: In 2017, the population of Multnomah County rose by 67,666 people since 2010⁹⁵

Number of Jobs Lost and Gained after Pre-Recession Peak



Source: BLS, Oregon Office of Economic Analysis. Occupational Data, Grouped Median Wages.

Figure 16: Oregon Job Polarization - the number of high and low-wage jobs has finally surpassed levels prior to the Great Recession, while middle-income jobs have not recovered 10 years later⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Chanay et al. (2018).

⁹⁶ Chanay et al. (2018).

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Figure 17: \$20.35 is the median wage of all occupations in Multnomah County, which is below the self-sufficiency standard⁹⁷

5.3. RISING HOUSING PRICES IMPACT ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

As a result of population and economic changes in the state, housing prices have increased substantially, making home ownership out of reach for many Oregonians and reducing the availability of affordable housing. In April 2018, the median Portland home reached \$400,000 for the first time and rental prices rose 13.7% when compared to 2017. The percent change in home sale prices is highest in suburban areas outside of inner-Portland: Vancouver, Woodburn, Beaverton, and Gresham.⁹⁸ New construction sale price is highest in SE Portland, averaging over \$400,000. As of 2017, Oregon had the 9th lowest home ownership rates in the nation. The Metro Area vacancy rates have increased from 3% in 2015 to 5% in 2018. By December 2018, there will be 12,000 new housing units but this has not affected affordable housing units as much as promised. Increased prices have extended across the state and the median home value in rural Oregon is 30% higher than the average rural region in the US.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Chanay et al. (2018).

⁹⁸ Zillow. (2019). [Portland Home Prices and Values](#). Accessed on May, 20, 2019.

⁹⁹ Brown, K., LaBar, J. (2018). Housing Policy Agenda: Housing Stability for Children, Veterans, and the Chronically Homeless and Increased Housing Supply for Urban and Rural Communities. State of Oregon, Office of the Governor Kate Brown. August 30, 2018.

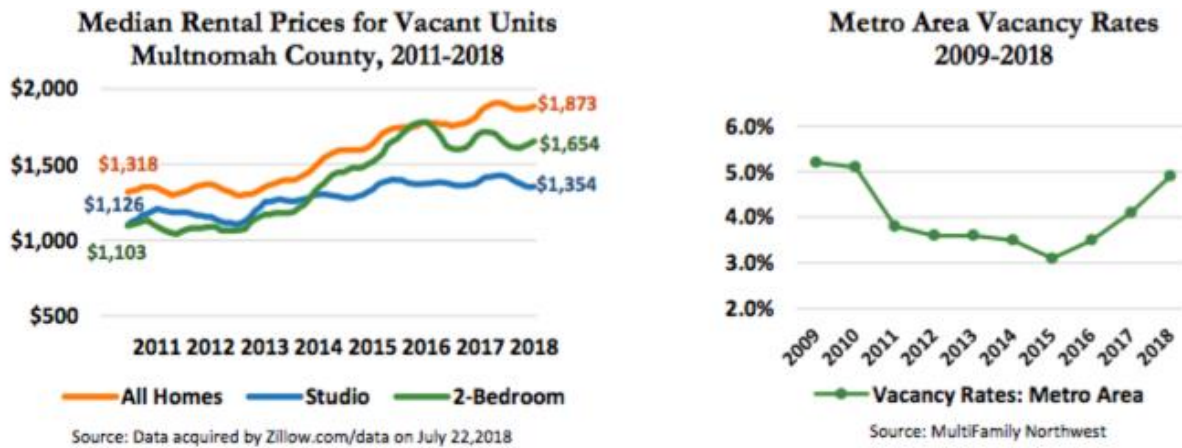


Figure 18: In April 2018, the median Portland home tops \$400,000 for the first time and rental prices rose 13.7% when compared to 2017; the Metro Area vacancy rates have increased from 3% in 2015 to 5% in 2018¹⁰⁰

A study on Portland apartment sales and rent showed that 90% of sales of apartment buildings (totaling 68,000 units) were mid-quality apartments that are often upgraded and marketed towards higher-paying tenants.¹⁰¹ This affects the availability of low-income rental units.

Oregon has taken steps to increase renter protection and control rent increases. In February 2019, Governor Kate Brown signed into law the first statewide rent control bill, which caps annual rent increases at 7% plus inflation.¹⁰² The bill also protects against some instances of no-cause eviction. Landlords must cite a plausible reason for eviction after the first year of tenancy.¹⁰³ If there is a “landlord-based” reason to evict, the landlord must provide the tenant with relocation assistance, which is equal to one month’s rent. There are specific situations that are allowed exceptions. The last several years of increased renter protections have shown reductions in eviction numbers from 7,603 in 2007 to 5,493 cases in 2015; it is expected to continue to decrease in light of the new 2019 rent control bill.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Chanay et al. (2018).

¹⁰¹ Monahan, R. (2018). Portland developers are offering renters Amazon gift cards to move into their luxury apartments. August 15, 2018.

¹⁰² Njus, E. (2019). [Oregon Gov. Kate Brown signs nation’s first statewide rent control law](#). OregonLive. February 28, 2019.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Schmid, T. (2016). [Through the “Eviction Mill.”](#) Portland Mercury.

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Average Rents in Portland vs. Average Median Income Percentages, 2017

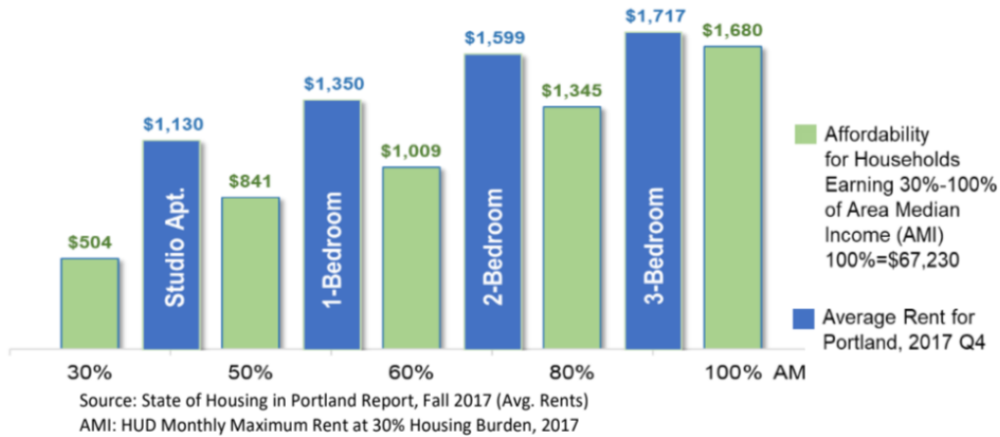


Figure 19: Average rent increasing faster than median income percentages¹⁰⁵

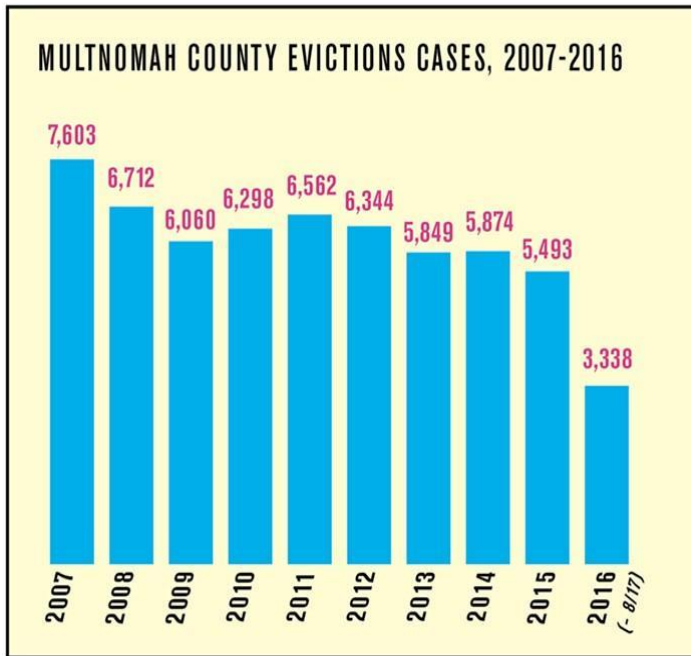


Figure 20: Eviction cases have decreased from 7,603 in 2007 to 5,493 cases in 2015¹⁰⁶

5.4. NEW BUILD RATES AND CONSTRUCTION PRICE INDEX LIMIT AVAILABILITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Build rates are too slow and the construction price index is too high to keep up with the demand for housing, especially affordable housing. In Multnomah County, six new units of

¹⁰⁵ Chanay et al. (2018).

¹⁰⁶ Schmid, T. (2016).

housing were produced for every ten new households formed between 2010 and 2016.¹⁰⁷ Multnomah County lacks 29,000 units of affordable housing for households earning 50% of or below the area median income.¹⁰⁸ In 2016, the City of Portland approved a \$258.5 million housing bond aiming to create 1,300 affordable housing units. In 2018, Metro voters approved a \$652.8 million bond to finance affordable housing with a promise of 3,900 additional units. The proposal could fund the construction, acquisition, and renovation of affordable housing for 7,500 to 12,000 people in the greater Portland region.¹⁰⁹ As of July of 2019, Metro reports that it has 339 units under predevelopment.¹¹⁰

Multnomah County and Portland have committed to provide 2,000 units of housing over ten years for the chronically homeless with at least one disability. As of September 2018, 517 of those units have been made available. The average cost per unit is estimated to be about \$300,000. The estimate for services is about \$45 million a year.¹¹¹ Portland's auditor reports that the timeline for build out is five to eight years from 2016. As of June 2019, a total of 593 units have been acquired, constructed or are in the development process.¹¹²

Build rates are influenced by minimum lot sizes, minimum off-street parking requirements, maximum square footage allowances, maximum heights, adequate -infrastructure requirements, historic preservation, and other regulatory factors influencing the design of new homes.¹¹³ Accelerated apartment unit construction has created an influx of apartments with rents more than \$1,500 per month, this has decreased rent prices at the higher end of the market with a slowed increase in rent at the lower end of the spectrum.¹¹⁴ Market subsidies, such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, eased zoning requirements, and reduced fees for permits can assist in affordable housing supply. Building permit rates have been slow to rise since the Recession with the highest rates for single family units in Metro counties.¹¹⁵ Before the Inclusionary Zoning policy went into effect in February 2017, developers submitted permits for 19,000 units to avoid the rule. Since then (as of March 2018), 682 units applied for permits, providing 89 low-income units. Oregon Metro states that the greater Portland area is short

¹⁰⁷ Tapogna et al. (2018).

¹⁰⁸ Chanay et al. (2018).

¹⁰⁹ Brown et al. (2018).

¹¹⁰ Oregon Metro. (2018). [Affordable homes for greater Portland](#). June 7, 2018.

¹¹¹ A Home for Everyone. (2018). [Supportive housing plan complete! City Council and Board of County Commissioners to hear report Tuesday](#). September 11, 2018.

¹¹² Portland City Auditor. (2019). [Portland Housing Bond: Early implementation results mostly encouraging](#). June 2019.

¹¹³ Tapogna et al. (2018).

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Chanay et al. (2018).

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48,000 homes.¹¹⁶ The Corporation for Supportive Housing estimates that Oregon needs 12,388 units of housing to meet the needs of the chronically homeless.¹¹⁷

5.5. RISING RENT IS ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASES IN HOMELESSNESS

Data support that there is a strong association between rent increases and the number of people experiencing homelessness. Economists have shown that a 10% increase in rent leads to a 13.6% increase in homelessness and that median rent can explain 51% of the variance in the rates of homelessness in 2017.¹¹⁸¹¹⁹ Current forecasts predict that the region's median rents will increase 14% from 2018 to 2022, which could increase the incidence of homelessness from 27.1 to 31.9 individuals for every 10,000 residents.¹²⁰ The historically low vacancy rate of 5-6% is not expected to change.¹²¹ A study from Zillow, an American online real estate database company, affirms that forecast and identifies two rent affordability thresholds after which rates of people experiencing homelessness increases: when people of Area Median Income (AMI) in a community spend more than 22% of that income on rent, there is an uptick in the rates of people experiencing homelessness, and when that community spends over 32% on rent, the rate of homelessness becomes significantly higher.¹²² Rent affordability in Portland for those earning Area Median Income is currently at 29.8%. If business as usual continues, Portland is at risk of reaching Zillow's 32% rent affordability plateau.

¹¹⁶ Small, R. (2018). [You are here: A snapshot of greater Portland's need for affordable homes](#). Metro. April 24, 2018.

¹¹⁷ Brown et al. (2018).

¹¹⁸ Tapogna et al. (2018).

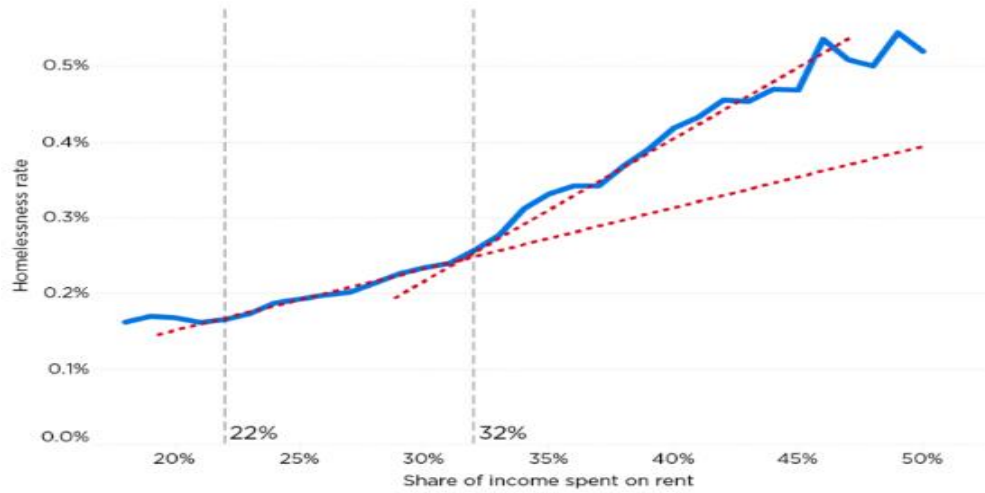
¹¹⁹ Quigley J. M. & Raphael, S. (2001). The Economics of Homelessness: The Evidence from North America. *European Journal of Housing Policy* 1, no. 3: 323-336.

¹²⁰ Tapogna et al. (2018).

¹²¹ Ibid.

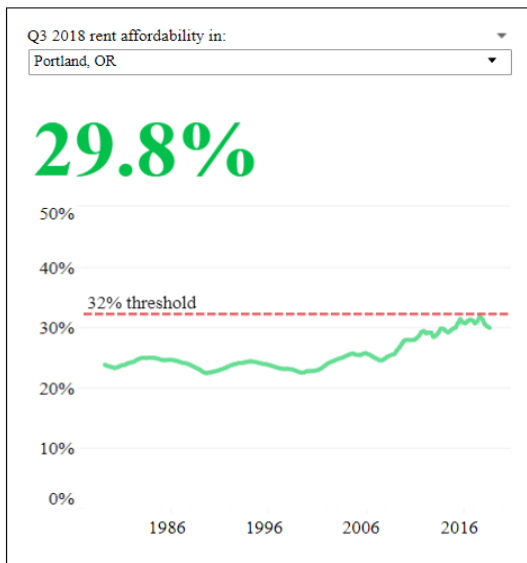
¹²² Glynn, C. & Casey, A. (2018). [Homelessness Rises Faster Where Rent Exceeds a Third of Income](#). Zillow.

An uptick in rent affordability beyond 22 percent translates into more people experiencing homelessness. Beyond 32 percent means a faster-rising rate of homelessness — which could mean a homelessness crisis, unless there are mitigating factors within a community.



Zillow Economic Research | Source: An analysis by Zillow Research Fellow Chris Glynn of the University of New Hampshire, Thomas Byrne of Boston University and Dennis Culhane of the University of Pennsylvania.

Figure 21: Homelessness climbs faster when rent reaches 22% and 32% thresholds of the Area Median Income. When people in a community spend more than 22% of their Area Median Income on rent, there is an uptick in the rates of people experiencing homelessness. When the community spends over 32% on rent, the rate of homelessness becomes significantly higher.¹²³



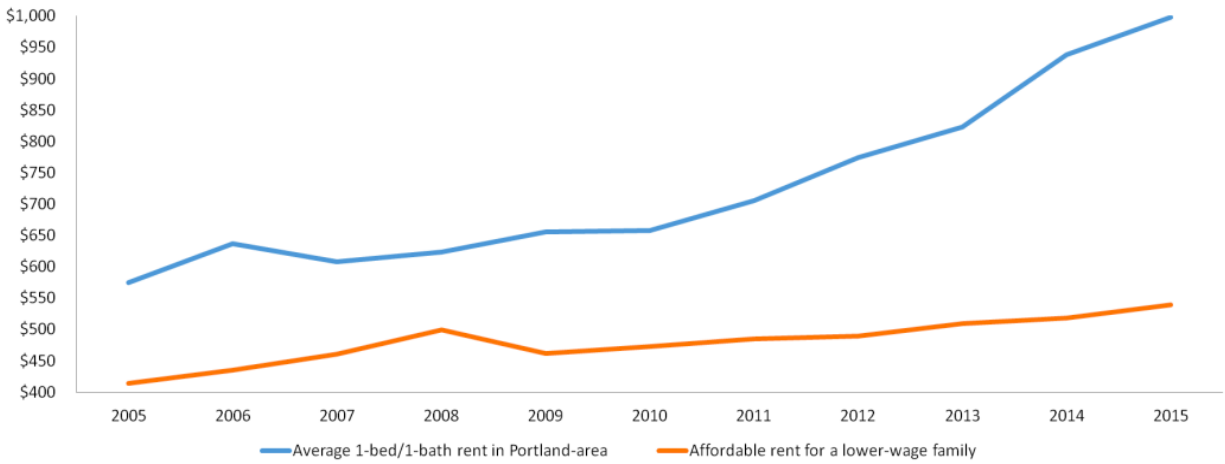
Zillow Economic Research | Source: Zillow Rent Affordability (Q3 2018)

Figure 22: Portland is above the 22% rent affordability threshold but below the 32% threshold

¹²³ Ibid.

The Challenge: Rents Outpacing Incomes

Portland-Area Rent Hikes Outpace Income Gains for Low-Wage Workers



Sources: Multifamily NW survey data, American Community Survey 2005-15

Figure 23: Trends in the Portland area show rent increasing at faster rates than income¹²⁴

¹²⁴ [Portland City Council & Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Joint Briefing](#), February 14, 2017.

5.6. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEFICITS EXACERBATE HOMELESSNESS

Over 31% of Oregonians are considered “low income,” earning less than 200% of the federal poverty line.¹²⁵ Twenty-four percent are covered by Medicaid/CHIP. Sixteen percent of the State receives food assistance through SNAP, the modern federal Food Stamp program.¹²⁶ One in three households struggled to afford housing in 2016.¹²⁷ Many households are housing cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened, especially among low and extremely low income households.¹²⁸ Severely cost-burdened households are at higher risk for instability. The EcoNorthwest Report (2019) reports that tens of thousands of households are at risk of losing their homes at any given time due to high rental costs.¹²⁹

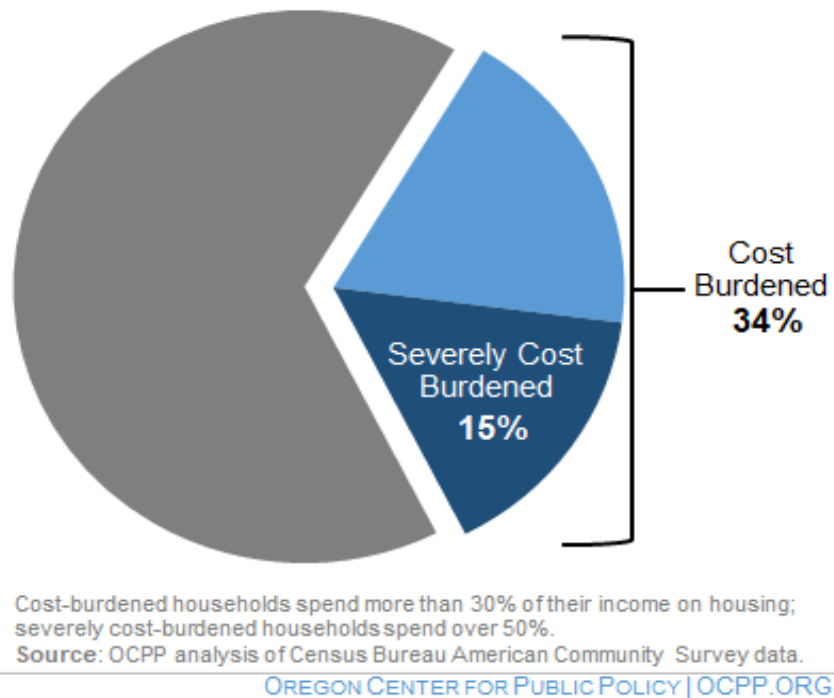


Figure 24: One in three struggles to afford housing¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation. (2018). Medicaid in Oregon, November 2018. Retrieved from <http://files.kff.org/attachment/fact-sheet-medicaid-state-OR>.

¹²⁶ Nchako, C. & Cai, L. (2018). [A closer look at who benefits from SNAP: State-by-State Fact Sheets](#). Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. December 3, 2018.

¹²⁷ Oregon Center for Public Policy. (2018). [One in three Oregon families struggle to afford housing](#). State of Working Oregon Series. March 15, 2018.

¹²⁸ National Low Income Housing Coalition. 2019 Oregon Housing Profile. Retrieved from https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/SHP_OR.pdf.

¹²⁹ Tapogna, J., & Baron, M. (2019). Homelessness in Oregon: A Review of Trends, Causes, and Policy Options. EcoNorthwest for the Oregon Community Foundation. March 2019.

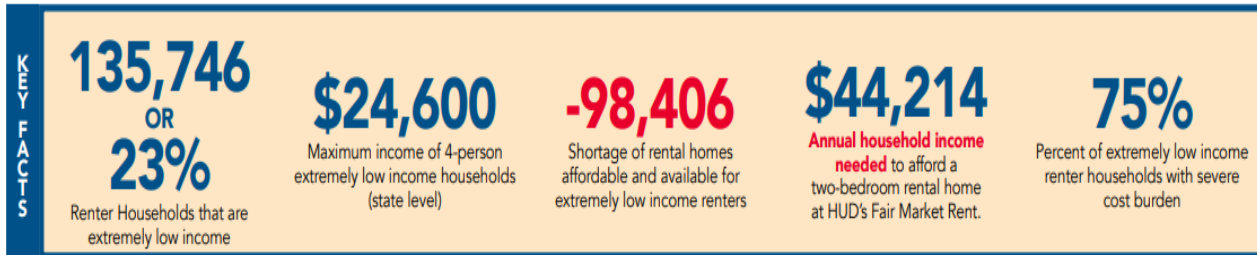
¹³⁰ Ibid.

2019 OREGON HOUSING PROFILE

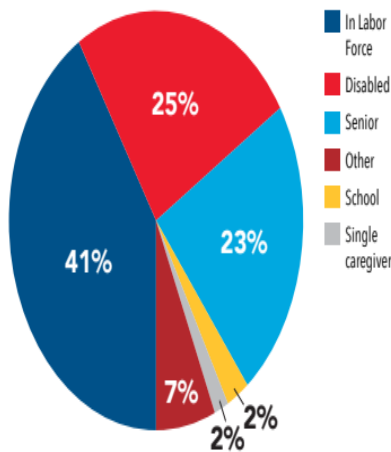


Across Oregon, there is a shortage of rental homes affordable and available to extremely low income households (ELI), whose incomes are at or below the poverty guideline or 30% of their area median income (AMI). Many of these households are severely cost burdened, spending more than half of their income on housing. Severely cost burdened poor households are more likely than other renters to sacrifice other necessities like healthy food and healthcare to pay the rent, and to experience unstable housing situations like evictions.

SENATORS: Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden

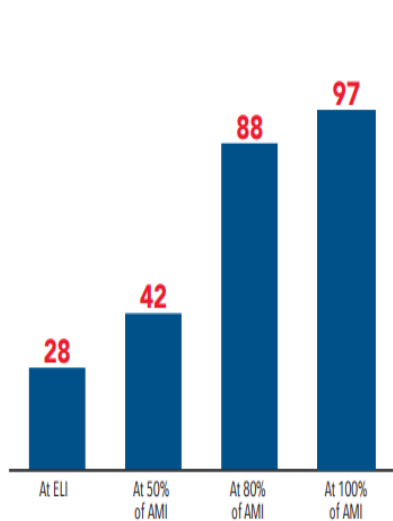


EXTREMELY LOW INCOME RENTER HOUSEHOLDS



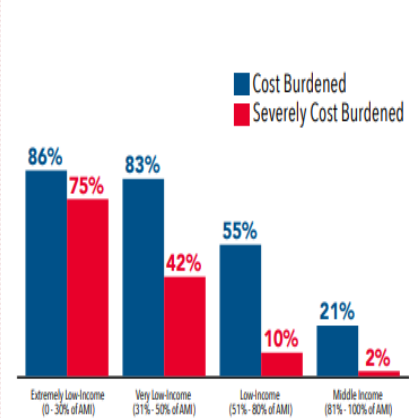
Note: Mutually exclusive categories applied in the following order: senior, disabled, in labor force, enrolled in school, single adult caregiver of a child under 7 or of a household member with a disability, and other. Nationally, 15% of extremely low-income renter households are single adult caregivers, more than half of whom usually work more than 20 hours per week and 2% of whom are in school. Source: 2017 ACS PUMS.

AFFORDABLE AND AVAILABLE HOMES PER 100 RENTER HOUSEHOLDS



Source: NLIHC tabulations of 2017 ACS PUMS

HOUSING COST BURDEN BY INCOME GROUP



Renter households spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs and utilities are cost burdened, those spending more than half of their income are severely cost burdened. Source: NLIHC tabulations of 2017 ACS PUMS.

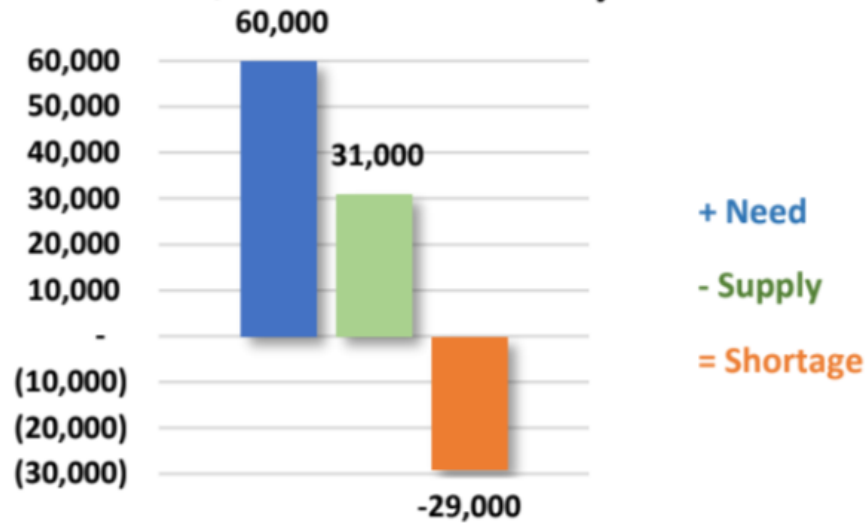
Updated: 02/28/2019

1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20005 WWW.NLIHC.ORG

Figure 25: 2019 Oregon Housing Profile from the National Low-Income Housing Coalition

The lack of affordable housing exacerbates the homelessness crisis. Multnomah County lacks 29,000 units of affordable housing for households under 50% or below of the AMI.¹³¹ ¹³² The Multnomah County Housing Authority, now known as Home Forward, provides 6,300 tenant-based rental vouchers and 2,860 project-based vouchers. Its waitlist has 3,065 people and has not been opened to new applicants since September 2016.¹³³ The Housing Authority of Clackamas County has 1,430 tenant-based vouchers and 92 project-based units. Its seven-year waitlist has 830 people on it.¹³⁴ The Washington County Housing Authority provides 2,700 tenant-based vouchers and 196 project-based housing units. Its waitlist has not been open to new applicants since 2011 and currently has 2,500 people on its waitlist¹³⁵ The Vancouver Housing authority offers 2,250 tenant-based vouchers and 650 project-based with 552 households on its waitlist. This totals to 7,000 households on waitlists for voucher programs across the Portland Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). Universal housing assistance, extended to all very-low income renters, could reduce the region’s homeless count by 2,240 people.¹³⁶

Affordable Housing Needs among Households Earning 30-50% AMI, Multnomah County



Source: Oregon Metro Report, you Are Here, 2018
 *50% AMI (based on 2011 – 2015 figures)

Figure 26: Need, supply, and shortfall in Multnomah County¹³⁷

¹³¹ Redden, J. (2018). [Building affordable housing in Portland is not so affordable](#). Oregon Public Broadcasting. June 12, 2018.

¹³² Chanay et al. (2018).

¹³³ Tapogna et al. (2018).

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Chanay et al. (2018).

The Challenge of Homelessness in Oregon: What's to Be Done?

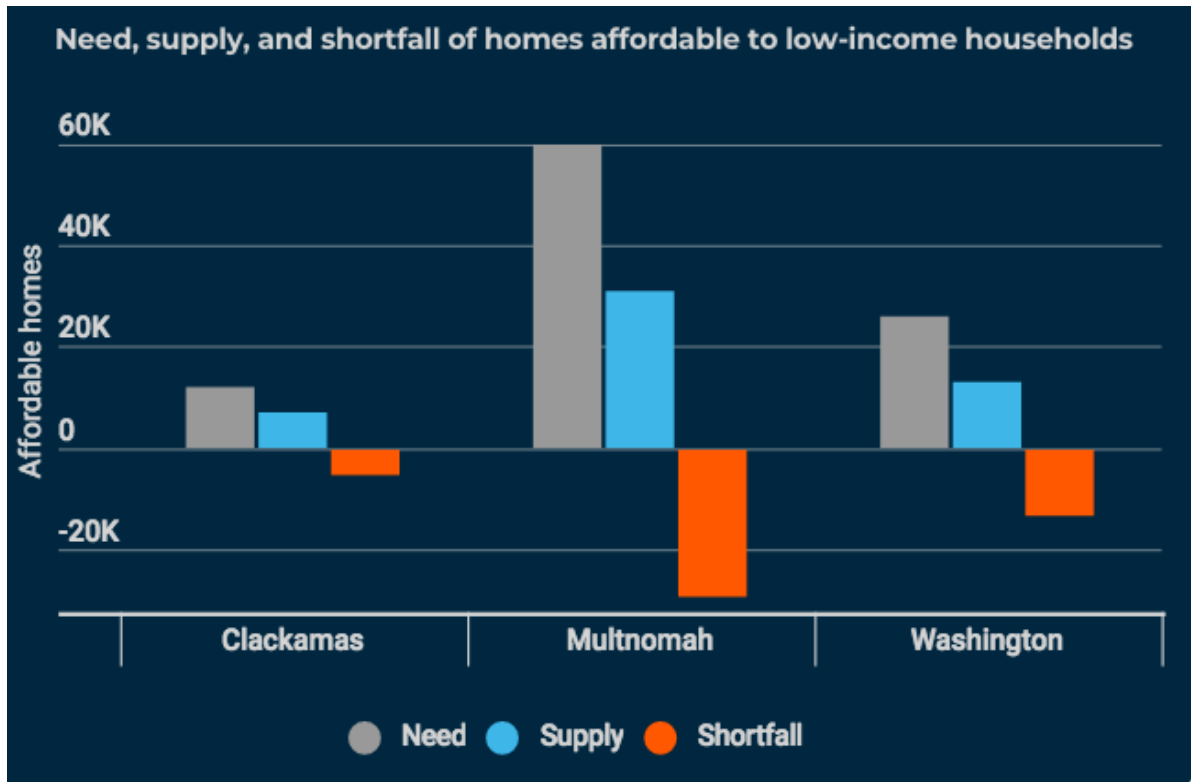


Figure 27: Need, supply, and shortfall of affordable homes in Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington County¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Tapogna et al. (2018).

5.7. INABILITY OF HALF OF OREGONIANS TO ACCUMULATE WEALTH

Because of the lack of income increases, 50% of Oregonians are unable to accumulate enough wealth to financially endure unplanned emergencies such as a job loss or a medical emergency, let alone accumulate enough funds for a down payment on a house. Due to historic discriminatory practices,¹³⁹ African American, Native American, and other minority groups are at a disproportionate risk of losing financial stability as a result of an unplanned financial emergency. Further, the possibility of eviction is higher for this group of Oregonians. Lack of wealth and homelessness are related and over time are being exacerbated.

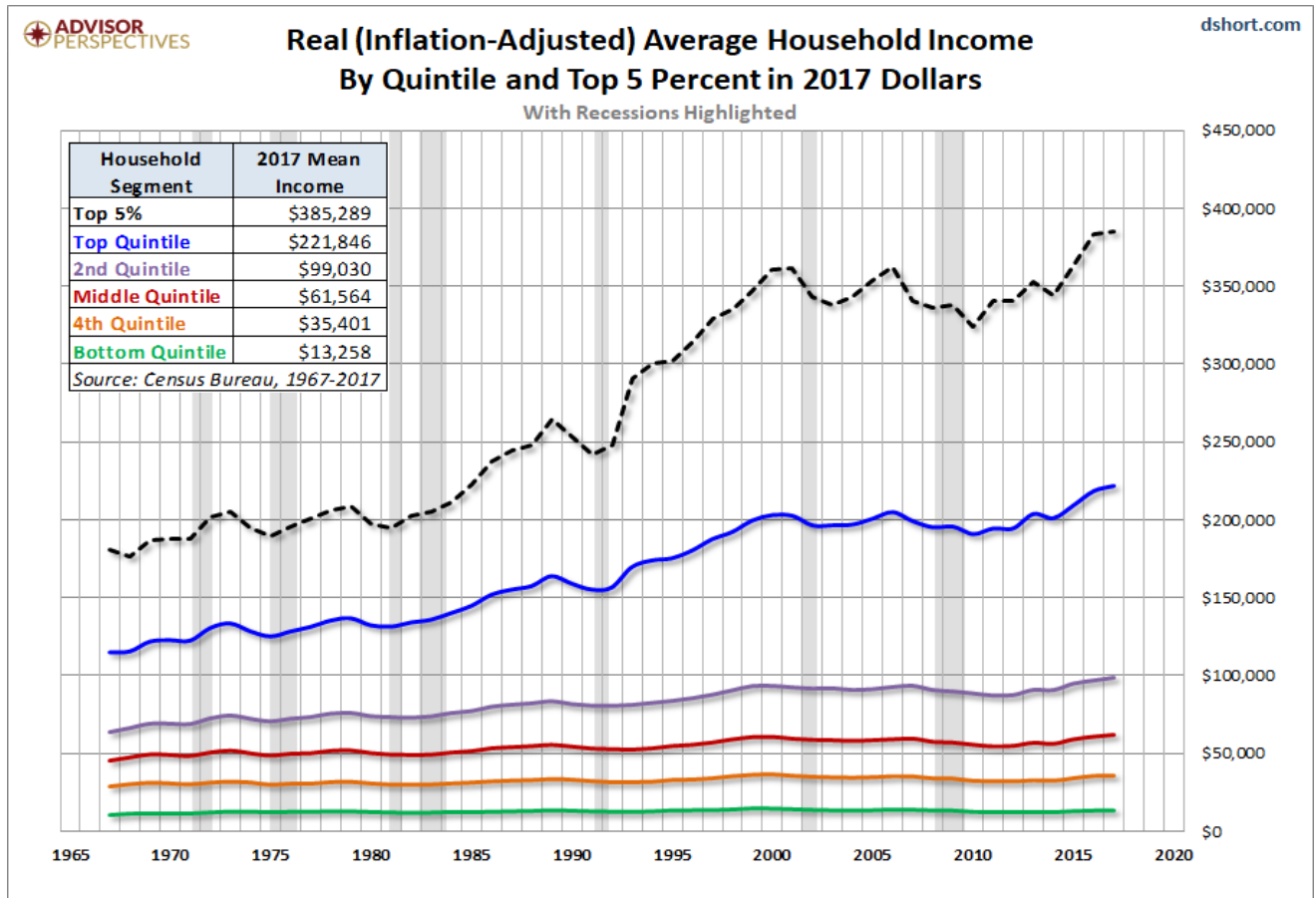


Figure 28. Note the rise of income in Portland of the top five percent since 1967, compared to the modest or virtually flat rise in the lowest 60%.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Blumenauer, E. (2019).

¹⁴⁰ Misliniski, J. (2018). [U.S. Household Incomes: A 51-year Perspective](#). October 16, 2018. Advisor Perspectives.

The Challenge of Homelessness in Oregon: What's to Be Done?

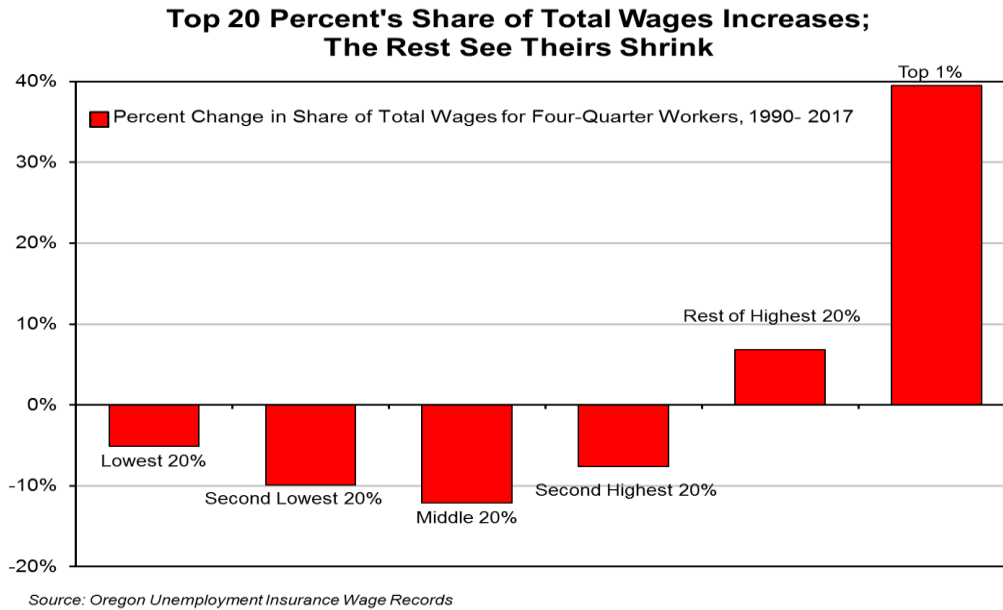


Figure 29. The top 20 percent's share of total wages increase, while the rest of the population see their wages decrease.¹⁴¹

Date	Top 1% (%)	90-99% (%)	50-90% (%)	Bottom 50% (%)
1989:Q4	23.6	37.4	35.2	3.8
1994:Q4	26.0	35.0	35.6	3.4
1999:Q4	28.4	35.2	32.9	3.5
2004:Q4	27.8	36.3	33.9	2.0
2009:Q4	28.0	40.6	31.3	0.1
2014:Q4	30.9	39.0	29.4	0.7
2018:Q4	30.9	38.9	29.1	1.2

Figure 30. “The figures (for the US), listed as percentage of national wealth, are laid out above. (The Federal Reserve reports data for each quarter—for readability’s sake, we have selected numbers at intervals.) Bottom line: At the end of 1989, the top ten percent of Americans had 61 percent of wealth and the bottom 90 percent had 39 percent. As of the end of 2018, the top ten

¹⁴¹ Peniston, B. (2018). [Wage Inequality in Oregon: The Widening Gap](#). July 24, 2018. State of Oregon Employment Department.

*percent had nearly 70 percent (69.8 percent) of wealth, the bottom 90 percent just over 30 percent (30.2 percent)."*¹⁴²

One antidote, used in Finland since the 19th century and Norway since 2005, is an annual Tax Disclosure Day, permitting any interested citizen to peruse his neighbor's tax return. "Though some complain that the tradition is an invasion of privacy, most say it has helped the country resist the trend toward growing inequality that has crept across of the rest of Europe. We're looking at the gap between normal people and those rich, rich people — is it getting too wide?" said Tuomo Pietilainen, an investigative reporter at Helsingin Sanomat, [Finland's] largest daily newspaper. "When we do publish the figures, the people who have lower salary start to think, 'Why do my colleagues make more?' ...Our work has the effect that people are paid more. Employers have to behave better than in conditions where there is no transparency."¹⁴³

5.8. LAND USE AND THE HOMELESS CRISIS IN OREGON

While Oregon's Land Use system has urban growth boundaries around cities, it specifically requires cities and counties to provide a 20-year supply of buildable land for affordable housing. Still, it is clear that there is not enough affordable housing in Oregon. Taking into consideration family formations, affordability and population increases,¹⁴⁴ it is estimated there was an underbuilding of housing units statewide between 2000 and 2015 of 155,000 units. Between 2000 and 2016, statewide, only 63 units were produced for every 100 households formed.¹⁴⁵ Land use regulations frequently cause underproductions of housing.¹⁴⁶

The 2019 legislature undertook several additional steps to remedy the housing shortage. State rent control requirements put some limits on evictions and on yearly increases in rents (7% + inflation).¹⁴⁷ Further, Oregon now requires cities with more than 10,000 people to allow up to four-plexes and "cottage clusters" in areas zoned for single-family homes.¹⁴⁸ In addition, local governments can provide rules for approval of accessory dwelling units on lots in urban areas. Oregon has provided for accessory dwelling units in rural residential areas.¹⁴⁹ In the long run a new planning mandate will be implemented requiring development and implementation of a housing needs analyses and production strategies on a city by city basis. Regular monitoring and strategy improvements will be required.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴² Dubb, S. (2019). [Extent of nation's growing wealth inequality revealed by Fed's new data set](#). June 18, 2019. Nonprofit Quarterly.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ ORS 197.296(2) and Oregon's Statewide Planning Goal 10. Accessed Dec. 19, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/OP/Documents/goal10.pdf>.

¹⁴⁵ Up for Growth. [Housing Underproduction in Oregon](#). Accessed Dec. 31, 2019.

¹⁴⁶ Tapogna et al. (2019).

¹⁴⁷ SB 608 (2019).

¹⁴⁸ HB 2001 (2019).

¹⁴⁹ ORS 215.501

¹⁵⁰ State of Oregon. (2019). [2019 Summary of Legislation: Land Use](#).

The Challenge of Homelessness in Oregon: What's to Be Done?

Governor Kate Brown and the 2019 legislature, working through the Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services (OHCS), have addressed homelessness and the housing supply by: (1) funding homeless prevention, \$70.5 M; (2) providing funds to increase the supply of affordable public housing, \$206.5M; and (3) investing in permanent supportive housing, \$54.5M.¹⁵¹

The 2019 Legislature also adopted bills requiring cities to allow use of **skinny lots**,¹⁵² and House Bill 2006 establishes grants to support programs related to **tenant and landlord education services**, fair housing training, and assistance for low-income Oregonians and survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault to find and access rental housing, and tenant legal services.¹⁵³ House Bill 2056 allows **OHCS to guarantee loans** made to persons with moderate incomes.¹⁵⁴ For **small home** construction, House Bill 2423 changes requirements for fire sprinkler systems to avoid triggering a larger water line.¹⁵⁵ House Bill 2997 exempts continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs) from inclusionary zoning requirements.¹⁵⁶

As to public housing, Portland has passed a \$258 million bond measure to provide 1,300 affordable units, and Metro has passed a \$658 million bond measure to provide 3,900 such units. Yet, the private market is only producing 63 units for every 100 family formations.¹⁵⁷

Portland has provided requirements for inclusive affordable housing in new apartment buildings and has provided property and construction excise tax abatement.¹⁵⁸

Notwithstanding all these provisions, there is still a shortage of housing units in Oregon. Choices confronting Oregon and its urban areas are to: (1) allow even more intensive uses in urban areas; (2) increase the amounts of subsidies for affordable housing; (3) allow more reductions in taxes and System Development Charges for affordable units in Oregon; (4) increase the urban growth boundary to include all urban reserves now and thus increase the amount of land available for housing; and (5) capture more of less intensively used urban spaces (e.g., an estimated 42,000 bedrooms for rent under programs like HomeShare).¹⁵⁹

5.9. PROLIFERATION OF UNSANCTIONED CAMPS

Multiple public surveys have shown concern for the proliferation of unsanctioned camps. Homelessness has been identified as the top problem in the Portland area. While the

¹⁵¹ Oregon Housing and Community Services. (2019). [2019 Legislative Highlights](#). Accessed Jan. 4, 2020.

¹⁵² 2019 Oregon Laws Chapter 623.

¹⁵³ State of Oregon (2019). [2019 Summary of Legislation: Housing](#).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ A recent [Wall Street Journal](#) editorial (WSJ 1/6/20 p.19) questions Portland's land use decisions, but it does not mention the inability of developers and their market to fill the affordable housing needs either in Portland or in other cities in the United States.

¹⁵⁸ Portland Ordinances, Chapter 30. (2017).

¹⁵⁹ Tapogna et al. (2019).

public wants these camps removed, measures of sentiment indicate a desire for the availability of homes for those experiencing homelessness.

Notwithstanding the public's desires, there are strong limits on what local governments and others can do to eliminate homeless camps. Foremost is the Constitution of the United States, which, under the Eighth Amendment, prevents cruel and unusual punishment. As applied to the houseless population, a recent case, *Martin v. City of Boise* has applied this amendment by determining it is cruel and unusual punishment to arrest a person for loitering, trespassing, or other such crimes when that homeless person has nowhere else to go in the area. Thus, without housing first or at least shelters, it is impossible to limit in any meaningful way all unsanctioned camps.

The City of New York has attempted to solve this problem by providing barrier-free shelters to all comers, regardless of mental health, substance use, or other possible limitations. According to the Coalition for the Homeless in New York City:

In September 2019, there were 62,391 homeless people, including 14,962 homeless families with 22,083 homeless children, sleeping each night in the New York City municipal shelter system. Families make up more than two-thirds of the homeless shelter population.¹⁶⁰

The City of San Antonio has taken a different approach. Through its Haven of Hope program on a 22-acre campus, 1,700 people a day are served.¹⁶¹ However, some neighbors have had significant difficulty near the Haven of Hope campus.¹⁶²

According to Oregon State law, transitional housing generally refers to temporary accommodations that provide additional services, such as reintegration and employment support for individuals successfully released from incarceration, or residential treatment settings for individuals with behavioral health concerns, or supported camps for individuals experiencing homelessness. Municipalities in Oregon are currently authorized to provide transitional housing in the form of campgrounds within their urban growth boundaries for persons who lack permanent housing but for whom there is no available low-income alternative. Currently, such sites may consist of separate yurt structures; are required to provide parking and walkways; may provide other services such as telephone, water, toilets, showers, and laundry; and the municipality is authorized to limit the duration of a resident's stay. Facilities, if any, are regulated by provisions governing state recreational areas. Oregon's 2017 Transitional Housing Standard (model building codes available for adoption by municipalities) contains suggested construction standards for their establishment.

¹⁶⁰ Coalition for the Homeless. (2019). [New York City Homelessness: The Basic Facts](#).

¹⁶¹ Haven for Hope. (2018). [Haven for Hope Trifold](#). May 2018.

¹⁶² Stoeltje, M. (2012). [Haven for Hope causing headaches for neighbors](#). August 5, 2012. My San Antonio.

6. WHAT WORK HAS BEEN DONE?

6.1. STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS

In 2015, there were more people living on the streets than in shelters and the City of Portland declared a State of Emergency.¹⁶³ This allowed the city to expedite permitting of homeless shelters and affordable housing units, waive interfering zoning and building codes, and assess barriers preventing people moving from homelessness into housing.¹⁶⁴ The Joint Office of Homeless Services was also created during this time to help coordinate homeless services in the City of Portland, Gresham, and Multnomah County.¹⁶⁵

6.2. FORMATION OF THE JOINT OFFICE OF HOMELESS SERVICES (JOHS)

Collaboration on a regional, state, and federal level is required to fully address the reality of homelessness. In Multnomah County, local leaders recognized that a successful approach required partnership across various levels of local governance. As a result, the Joint Office of Homeless Services Intergovernmental Agreement was formed in July 2016. It is a collaboration between the City of Portland, acting by and through its Portland Housing Bureau (Home Forward), Multnomah County, and the City of Gresham to build upon prior successes, and to formalize the collaborative model of JOHS and homeless service providers called A Home for Everyone (AFFE).¹⁶⁶

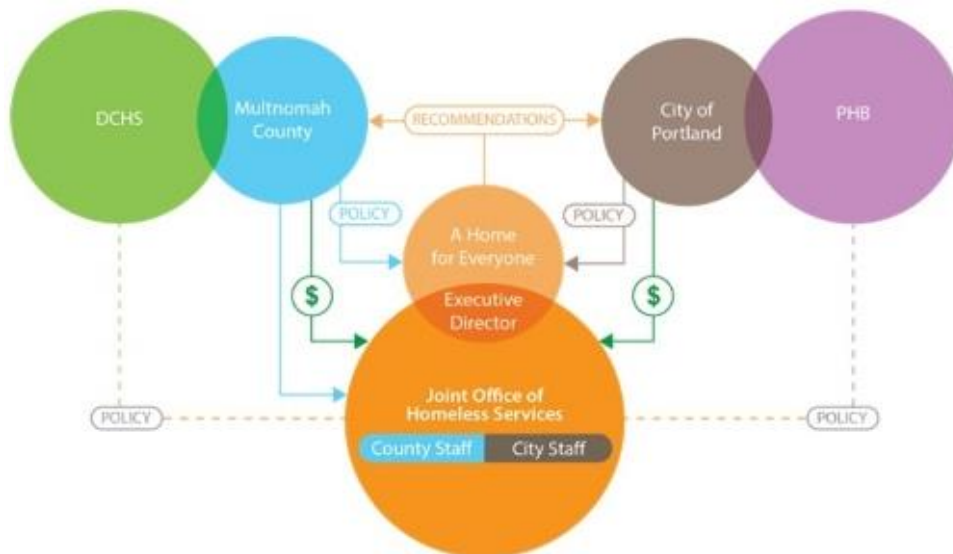


Figure 31: The Joint Office of Homeless Services¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Chanay et al. (2018).

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Joint Office of Homeless Services. (2016). [Intergovernmental Agreement](#).

¹⁶⁷ City of Portland & Multnomah County. (2018). Smarter, Together.

Twenty nongovernmental service providers with a variety of capabilities now address an annual flow of over 14,000 homeless persons seeking services.

The Joint Office is funded primarily from city/county funds in an amount that had grown to \$80 million a year in 2019. As noted by Multnomah County’s auditor, information regarding circumstances and services to homeless individuals is inadequate to assure fiscal controls or to glean cost efficiencies from the rapid growth of new agency spending. Consequently, the future cost impacts are difficult to forecast. Moreover, the squeezing of homelessness funding from city/county budgets is being felt by existing programs.

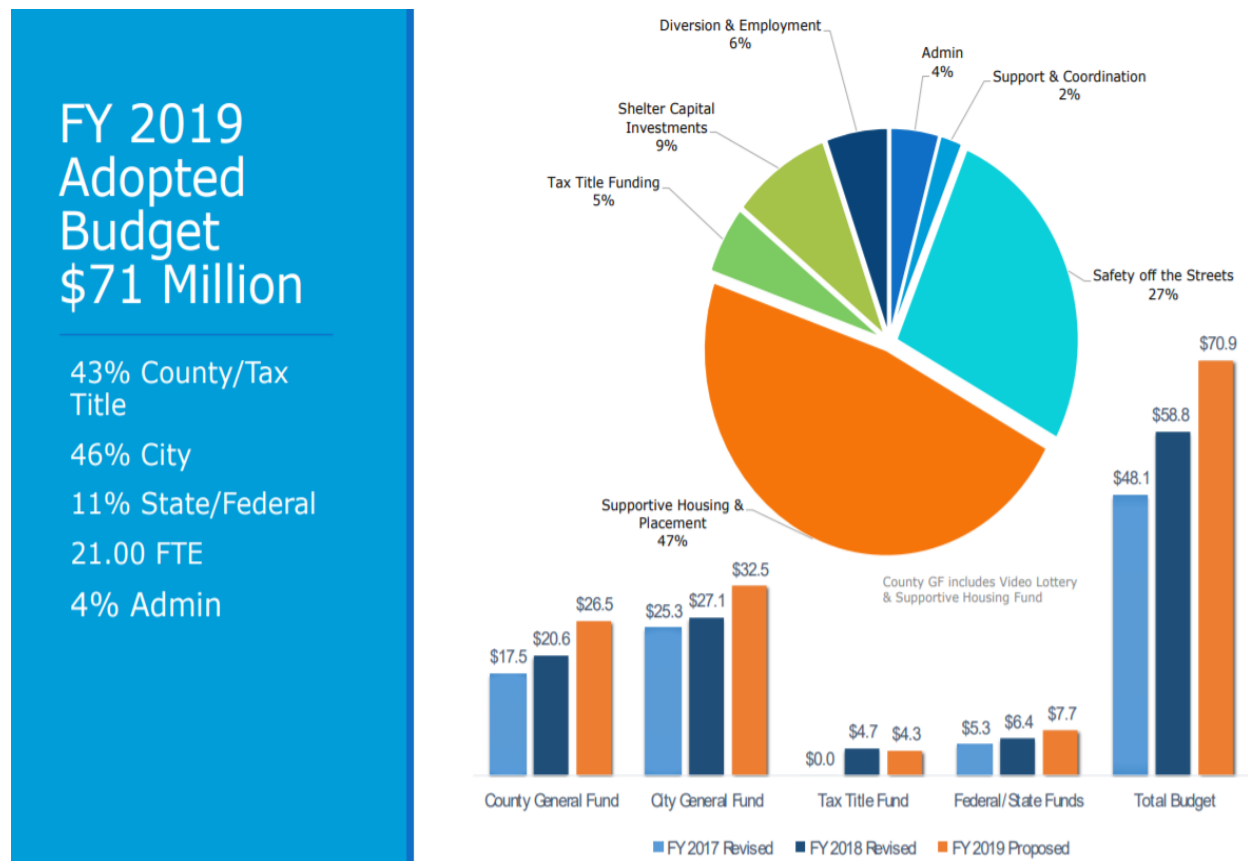


Figure 32: A Home for Everyone 2019 Budget by Contracted Service Type¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

The Challenge of Homelessness in Oregon: What's to Be Done?

Numerous providers received funding from the Joint Office in FY2017, to provide a breadth of homeless assistance services. Total funding to providers was about \$42 million dollars.

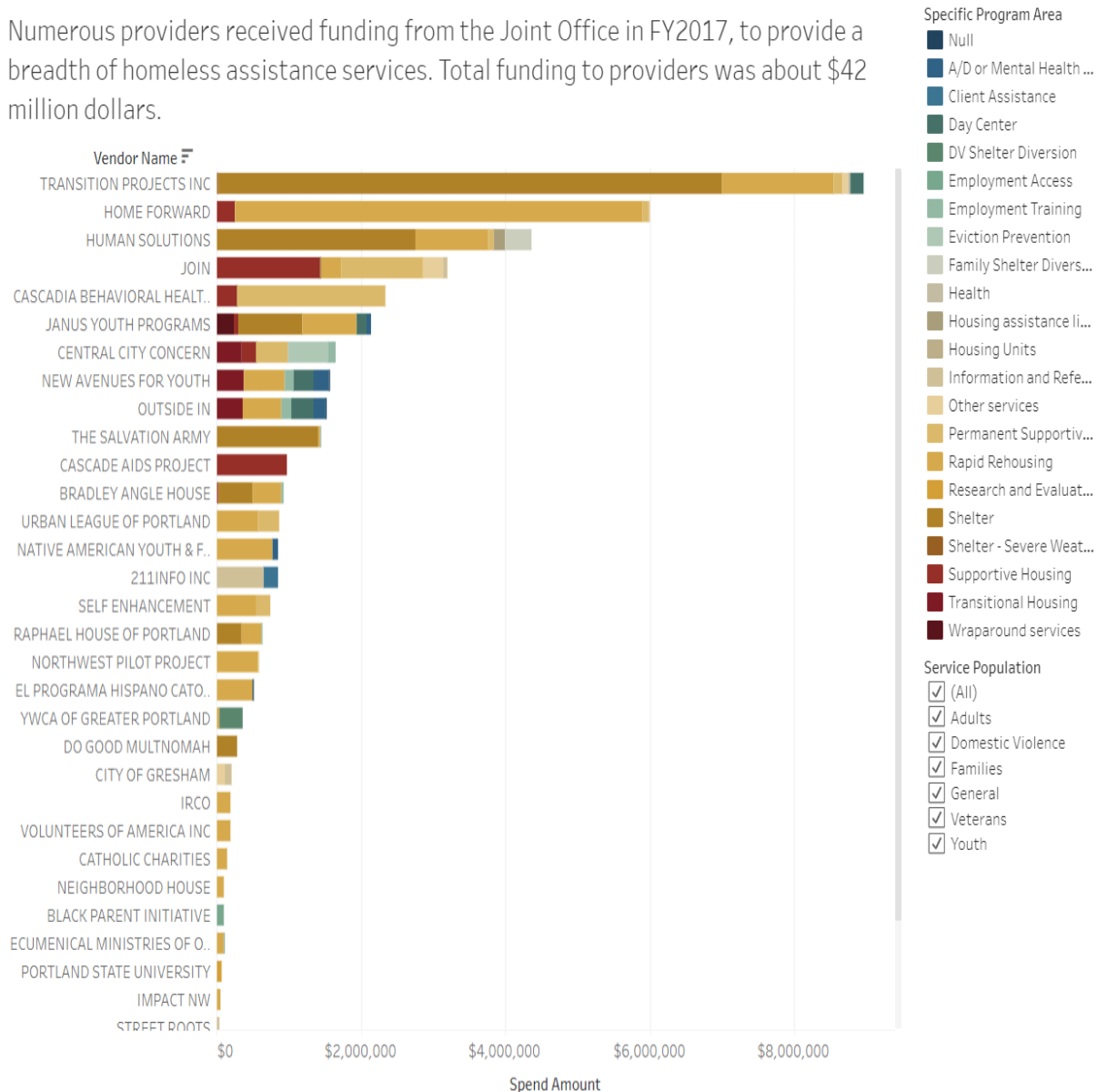


Figure 33: List of Service Providers funded by the Joint Office in 2017¹⁶⁹

6.3. POLICIES THAT ADDRESS HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

In order to address the diverse needs of our community, a multi-faceted approach must be taken to increase access to affordable housing. In Multnomah County, policies have been enacted to address eviction, rent subsidies, and supportive housing among low income renters, but their coordination is complex.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

6.3.1. Eviction Assistance

- The City of Portland and Multnomah County have focused on decreasing evictions. In 2017, Portland had the 6th lowest eviction rate (2%) of the 50 largest metro areas.¹⁷⁰
- Portland Utility Bureau provides utility bill rebate assistance to families at risk of eviction through a partnership with Home Forward by funneling \$640,000 into Home Forward's short-term rent assistance (STRA) program.¹⁷¹ This covers an annual opportunity of \$500, or 85%, of average annual cost of water and sewer services.¹⁷² STRA combines federal, state, and local revenue to fund up to 24 months of rental assistance to homeless families or families at risk of becoming homeless.¹⁷³
- Home Forward also provides emergency assistance through motel vouchers, eviction prevention, and housing placement assistance.¹⁷⁴ Home Forward is funded through \$85 million in HUD subsidies and grants and \$14 million in rental income. It has provided housing assistance to 14,890 in 2018.¹⁷⁵
- Portland City Council has implemented renter relocation protection of payments between \$2,900 to \$4,500 in moving expenses when a landlord issues a no-cause eviction or forces a tenant to move with rent increases of greater than 10%.¹⁷⁶
- Senate Bill 608 is the first statewide rent control bill in the country.¹⁷⁷ It caps annual rent increases to 7% plus inflation and increases renter protections against no-cause evictions.¹⁷⁸

If a person or family becomes homeless, the costs to society double (e.g. one figure we received was from an average of \$15,000/yr. to \$30,000/yr.). Portland State University has an estimated 1,000 students who are facing homelessness. The Beaverton School district has the highest number of students facing homeless in all of Oregon (e.g., 1,971 K-12 students).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁰ KATU News. (2017). [Portland's eviction rate ranks low among U.S. metro areas, study says](#). KATU. October 26, 2017.

¹⁷¹ Templeton, A. (2018). [Portland utility bureaus will help renters at risk of eviction](#). Oregon Public Broadcasting. May 23, 2018.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Home Forward. [Short-Term Help Paying Rent](#).

¹⁷⁴ Tapogna et al. (2018).

¹⁷⁵ Home Forward. (2018). [Dashboard July 2018](#).

¹⁷⁶ VanderHart, D. (2018). [Portland's Renter Relocation Policy is Now Permanent - And Stronger than Ever](#). Portland Mercury. March 7, 2018.

¹⁷⁷ Njus, E. (2019).

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Oregon Department of Education. [McKinney-Vento Act: Homeless Education Program](#). Oregon.gov. Accessed Dec. 31, 2019.

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6.3.2. Rent Subsidies

- Rent subsidies, such as the HUD Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), prevent homelessness but are in short supply.¹⁸⁰ The HCV program targets extremely low (<30% Median Family Income, MFI) and very low (<50% MFI) income households and allows them to pay 30% of their income on housing.¹⁸¹
- In Oregon, HUD-supported rental assistance provides funding for 9,000 households in public housing, 14,400 in project-based Section 8 housing, and 72,100 in tenant-based Section 8.¹⁸² (Section 8 of the Federal Public Housing Act of 1937 is the federal authorization for rent assistance to low income households.) The average HUD spending per unit is \$665/month or \$325/person/month.¹⁸³ In the tri-county area, nearly 11,500 individuals or families are on the waiting lists for regulated housing, waiting anywhere from 1-14 years.¹⁸⁴ Up to 30% of people that receive a voucher cannot find an available apartment and, thus, do not receive the assistance needed.

	Clackamas	Multnomah	Washington
Housing Choice Vouchers	1,656	9,975	2,803
Households on voucher waitlist	880	3,035	2,354
Estimated wait time for vouchers	Unknown; wait list closed*	Unknown; wait list closed*	Unknown; wait list closed*
Turnback rate	15%**	28%	19-30%***
Public housing units	545	1,286	243
Households on housing waitlist	3,252	6,883	1,320
Estimated wait time	1-7 years	14.5 years	2.8 years or more

Figure 34: Supply and demand of housing assistance¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ Tapogna et al. (2018).

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Small, R. (2018).

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Tapogna et al. (2018).

- The Multnomah County Housing Authority, now known as Home Forward, provides 6,300 tenant-based rental vouchers and 2,860 project-based vouchers. Its waitlist has 3,065 people and has not been opened to new applicants since September 2016.¹⁸⁶
- The Housing Authority of Clackamas County has 1,430 tenant-based vouchers and 92 project-based units. Its seven-year waitlist has 830 people on it.¹⁸⁷
- The Washington County Housing Authority provides 2,700 tenant-based vouchers and 196 project-based housing units. Its waitlist has not been open to new applicants since 2011 and currently has 2,500 people on it.¹⁸⁸
- The Vancouver Housing authority offers 2,250 tenant-based vouchers and 650 project-based with 552 households on its waitlist.

This totals to 7,000 households on waitlists for voucher programs across the Portland Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). Universal housing assistance, extended to all very-low income renters, could reduce the region's homeless count by 2,240 people.¹⁸⁹

6.3.3. Supportive Housing

- In July 2018, an Innovative Support Housing Pilot was launched between Home Forward, Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services, and JOHS providing \$12 million for projects that combine housing and mental health services.¹⁹⁰ The Housing as Health Initiative was implemented in November 2017 by six health care organizations, who pledged \$21.5 million for three buildings with 382 units of affordable housing with behavioral health and primary care services.¹⁹¹
- In 2018, the Joint Office allocated \$58 million to more than 20 service providers to prevent and address homelessness through housing assistance, shelters, employment training, domestic violence assistance, and mental health support.¹⁹² AHFE helped 4,900 people obtain housing, 6,139 people received prevention services, and 8,532 accessed emergency shelters.¹⁹³
- In late 2016, US HUD told agencies they could expect 95% of their current levels through February of 2017; it was extended until the end of June.¹⁹⁴ In 2017, Home Forward

¹⁸⁶ Tapogna et al. (2018).

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Hayes, E. (2018). Portland to fund affordable housing and mental health services. Portland Business Journals. July 30, 2018.

¹⁹¹ Hayes, E. (2017). Third of 3 Central City Concern health-targeted building breaks ground in Portland. Portland Business Journals. November 8, 2017.

¹⁹² [Portland City Council & Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Joint Briefing](#). February 14, 2017.

¹⁹³ A Home for Everyone. (2018). [End of Year Outcomes Report](#).

¹⁹⁴ VanderHart, D. (2017). Portlanders desperate for federal housing assistance won't get it this year. Portland Mercury. March 15, 2017.

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received \$111 million from HUD. They received \$118 million in 2018, but these amounts reflect a significant federal funding retreat from the 1970's.¹⁹⁵

6.3.4. Mentoring and Navigation Centers

There is a relatively small group of people who do not wish to enter shelters or otherwise abandon their way of life on the streets, or they do not trust the authorities. However, if the opportunity is provided and the opportunity is “real” or the need is great (such as freezing weather), many homeless persons can be convinced to undertake a change at such a “treatable moment.” They can be located and helped best by mentors or contacts they have come to know and trust (e.g., thru repeated contacts and offers of support). In Portland, these contacts have been trained by several entities, including the 170 Mentors trained by Transition Projects Inc., the Neighborhood Response Teams of the Portland Police, the mentor program of TPI, Central City Concern's Outreach Workers, and the recent creation and work of the JOHS-created Outreach/Navigation Teams.

6.4. SUPPORTIVE HOUSING COSTS

The supportive services associated with affordable housing is expensive, yet the long-term impact is cost effective. In 2006, the Portland Community Engagement Program (CEP), a program that provided supportive housing to unhoused individuals suffering from mental health illness and/or substance use, found that their services reduced the costs of healthcare and incarcerations from \$42,075 to \$17,199 per person.¹⁹⁶ Portland is planning on obtaining 2,000 units of supportive housing. It is estimated to cost \$41 million a year for the combined cost of operations, leasing, and services of the 2,000 units. That would average to \$56 a day per person, and the portion of the cost dedicated to supportive services would be \$22 a day.¹⁹⁷

Finding funds to pay for support service costs will continue to be a major challenge. In September of 2019, Portland, Multnomah County, and Metro agreed to divert 2.5% of hotel and rental car tax from tourist promotion to support homeless services.¹⁹⁸

6.5. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Originally, three of the authors of this report thought they could be mentors to people experiencing homelessness. After attending a Transition Projects Inc. training session for peer mentors, we realized we simply did not have enough experience with homelessness to be

¹⁹⁵ Home Forward. (2018). [Dashboard July 2018](#).

¹⁹⁶ Corporation for Supportive Housing. (2017). [2,000 units of supportive housing for Portland and Multnomah County. How much will it cost?](#)

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Harbarger, M. (2019). [Tourism taxes to fund homeless services in Portland housing bond projects](#). September 17, 2019. OregonLive.

mentors. Peer mentor graduates become specialists and have state certification.¹⁹⁹ Central City concern also has peer mentors.

AHFE has established a group of Navigation Teams.²⁰⁰ These teams work with the City of Portland and the Police in implementing the Portland Homelessness/Urban Camping Reduction Program, by meeting regularly, determining future sweeps, and in the days or weeks before the sweep, meeting multiple times with those camping to see if they will accept housing or support services. While a portion of campers exposed to sweeps may refuse housing resources for various reasons (perhaps due to substance misuse, safety concerns or specific rules of shelters, or because of having been let down multiple times in dealing with government agencies), once the multi-disciplinary navigation team has identified the homeless person's "treatable moment," it is important to have housing and support services readily available now. A related pilot, championed by Portland Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, is being implemented for responses to 911 calls made by those who are unhoused. It is loosely based on the CAHOOTS plan used by Lane County.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Oregon Health Authority. [Peer Support Specialist Training and Certification](#). Accessed Dec. 31, 2019.

²⁰⁰ City of Portland. [Navigation Team](#). Accessed Dec. 31, 2019.

²⁰¹ Harbarger, M. (2019). [Homeless first responder team to be housed in Portland fire bureau under new proposal](#). Nov. 15, 2019. OregonLive.

7. IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS ON OTHER SYSTEMS

7.1. CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

In an Oregonian article from July 2019, it was reported that the Portland Police Department lacked guidance on its role in the city's strategy to address homelessness.²⁰²

Half of all arrests by the Portland Police Bureau in 2017 were of a homeless person, despite only representing 3% of the population.²⁰³ Of this, 86% were for nonviolent crimes and 1,200 were procedural.²⁰⁴ 80% had been arrested at least one time before in the past 20 years.²⁰⁵ The Oregon Department of Justice census of current inmates in January 2018, showed that over half of inmates had a need for mental health treatment. Only 23% of inmates reported no history of substance abuse.²⁰⁶ According to Multnomah County Sheriff Reese, jails are at capacity.²⁰⁷ When those who have been arrested for nonviolent crimes do not appear in court, warrants are put out for their arrest. This compounds the trauma and can make finding housing and work much more difficult.²⁰⁸

In 2009, a Portland policy to prevent people from sitting or lying on public sidewalks was deemed unconstitutional, and stated that officials had to give 24-hour notice before cleaning or moving unsanctioned camps.²⁰⁹ In 2019, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decided that officials cannot prosecute people for sleeping on the street in the absence of alternative shelter.²¹⁰ The Court cited that it was cruel and unusual to criminalize the state of being homeless in public places if there were no other place to go. Because Oregon and Multnomah County have a high percentage of unsheltered people and insufficient housing and emergency shelter options to meet that need, the court ruling raises important considerations for how governments may manage unsanctioned camping.²¹¹

The Portland Police report that they have had inconsistent direction on how they are to interact with people experiencing homelessness and are unsure of their role in the City's strategic plan.²¹² Furthermore, their arrest and mental health data on people experiencing homelessness

²⁰² Bernstein, M. (2019).

²⁰³ Woolington, R., & Lewis, M. (2018). Portland homeless accounted for majority of police arrests in 2017, analysis finds. OregonLive. June 28, 2018.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Oregon Department of Corrections. (2018). [Issue Brief](#).

²⁰⁷ Citizens Crime Commission. (2019).

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Lewis, M. & Woolington, R. (2018). Take a deeper look at the numbers behind Portland police arrests of homeless people. OregonLive. June 29, 2018.

²¹⁰ United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. (2017). [Martin v. City of Boise](#).

²¹¹ Associated Press. (2018). Court: Cities can't prosecute people for sleeping on streets. OregonLive. September 4, 2018.

²¹² Bernstein, M. (2019). [Portland police lack consistent direction on encounters with homeless people, report finds](#). OregonLive. July 17, 2019.

has been unreliable, making it difficult to monitor and assess police response.²¹³ The lack of guidance and reporting raises concerns of police accountability. The report states that because people experiencing homelessness may need to access resources in highly visible areas such as the downtown area, they are at risk for having the police called on them based on their appearance.²¹⁴

Arrests per month, 2017

Starting in April, the majority of arrests each month in 2017 were of homeless people.

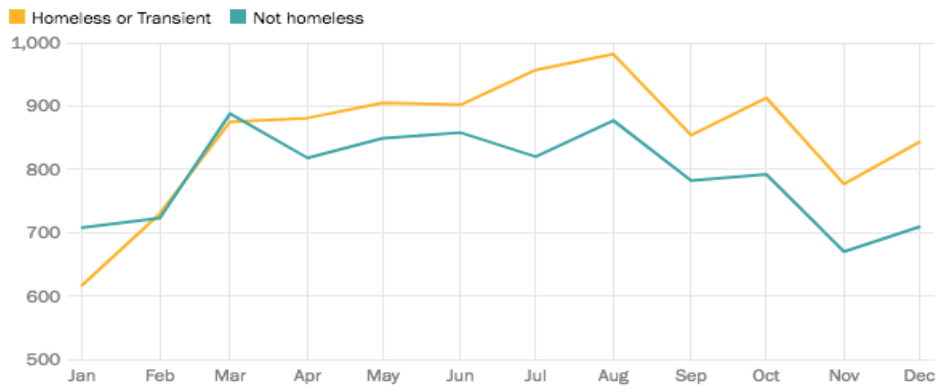


Figure 35: People experiencing homelessness accounted for majority of arrests in 2017²¹⁵

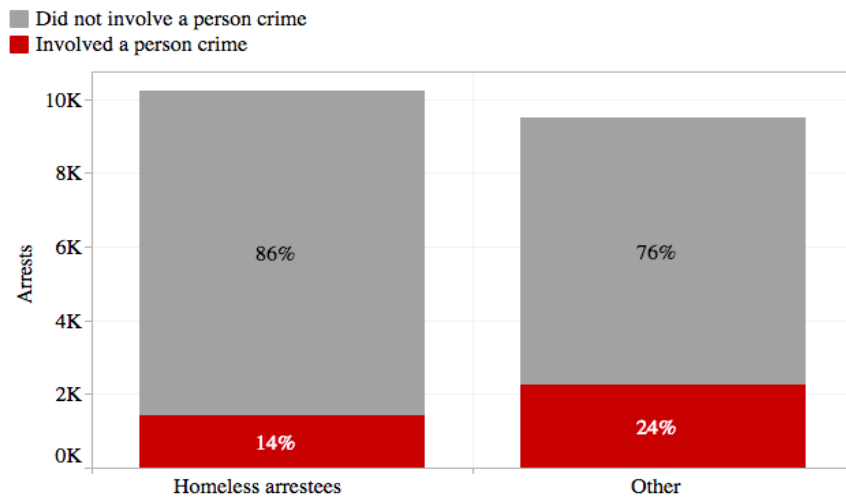


Figure 36: Most arrests of people experiencing homelessness did not involve a person-crime²¹⁶

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Woolington et al. (2018). Portland homeless accounted for majority of police arrests in 2017.

²¹⁶ Lewis et al. (2018). Take a deeper look at the numbers behind Portland police arrests of homeless people.

7.2. PUBLIC OPINION

The public has a wide range of opinions and ideas for solutions when it comes to addressing homelessness. One resident from Mulino, Oregon wrote to the Oregonian with the following suggestion:

An acquaintance of mine owns a few stores in downtown Portland. He has told me numerous times of the problems he has with homeless people around his businesses. Regularly, he has to take a pressure washer or a bucket of hot, soapy water to the façade of his establishment to clean the human feces and urine off this building... If you cannot do anything else, why not do as the Europeans do and build public toilets every three or four blocks? Kurfurstendamm in Berlin, a shopping street to rival any in the world, has multiple public toilets on both sides of the street. The city of Berlin is clean, as are most other major European cities because they understand human physiology and make facilities available to take care of the “call of nature” we all experience multiple times a day.²¹⁷

In 2019, a survey from the City of Portland showed that Portlanders across every race and age group believed homelessness to be a top issue and 88% were dissatisfied with the city's response, the highest level of dissatisfaction of any question on the survey.²¹⁸ Homelessness was cited as reasons for why people moved from the city and why they did not participate in Parks programs.²¹⁹ More than 40% of respondents across races found the high cost of living as another top challenge facing Portland.²²⁰ Finally, respondents across age and race chose housing affordability and addressing homelessness as a top budget priority.²²¹

A KGW survey from 2017 found that 29% of Portlanders ranked homelessness a top issue, while 12% said affordable housing.²²² Neither were listed in 2011 and 2014 surveys. 34% of respondents considered leaving the city because of homelessness. 56% were dissatisfied with Portland Police Bureau's response to homelessness, 52% with Portland business community's response, 51% with local news organizations, and 40% with local service providers. Respondents were divided on the city's governmental response, with 47% supporting and 47% opposing the city allowing people to camp in tents on public property until there are enough shelter beds. 92% said tents were a public health hazard; 74% said they harm Portland's economy, and 61% said allowing people experiencing homelessness to set up tents in public areas encourages them to stay on the streets.

²¹⁷ Early, M. (2019). Portland should provide public relief on public streets. Oregonian. Dec. 11, 2019.

²¹⁸ City of Portland Budget Office and HR&A. (2019).

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² DHM Research. (2017). KGW News Portland Homelessness Survey.

In 2017, one in five Portlanders reported having been homeless at some point in their lives and 41% knew a family member or friend who had experienced homelessness.²²³ The survey showed that Portlanders believed mental illness, lack of affordable housing, substance abuse, and unemployment were the main drivers of homelessness.²²⁴

There is also public concern that increasing support services for those experiencing homelessness will draw people from other regions who are experiencing homelessness, what some call the “magnet effect.” An analysis of the Portland-Gresham-Multnomah County found that two-thirds of unsheltered homeless individuals were from Multnomah County or had been here for two years.²²⁵ 6.3% moved to Multnomah County because of access to services and resources.²²⁶ Surveys in Seattle and San Francisco mirror Portland and say a quarter of people experiencing homelessness arrived within two years. Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler has acknowledged that increasing resources may attract people from outside of Portland, but contends that most are coming from within the region rather than other cities or states.²²⁷ He has criticized Clackamas County and Washington County for not funding a single full time emergency shelter, despite growing rates of homelessness.²²⁸ As many reports have already appreciated, Ted Wheeler acknowledges that a successful solution needs to be multi-faceted, regional, and take advantage of diverse partners.

The Citizens Crime Commission strongly recommends addressing public opinion and the vacuum of information that persists in the community regarding our unhoused neighbors.²²⁹ According to the same study, 26% of respondents felt that being homeless was a personal choice. For those making over \$75,000 a year, that number rose to 37%.²³⁰

In another effort to change public opinion, the Homelessness Research and Action Collaborative Center released a mythbuster quiz to help educate and dispel common misconceptions around homelessness.²³¹ For example, they report that less than 10% of homeless individuals moved to Multnomah County for services. Another example is that less than 20% of homeless individuals are responsible for illegal dumping, according to Metro. Having accurate information is the foundation for successful community engagement and stakeholder support.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Vespa, M. (2016). [Do more homeless people really move to Portland?](#) KGW8. May 10, 2016.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Redden, J. (2019).

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Citizens Crime Commission. (2019).

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative. (2019). Mythbusters: Homelessness Myths vs. Facts. <https://www.pdx.edu/homelessness-collaborative/homelessness-mythbusters>

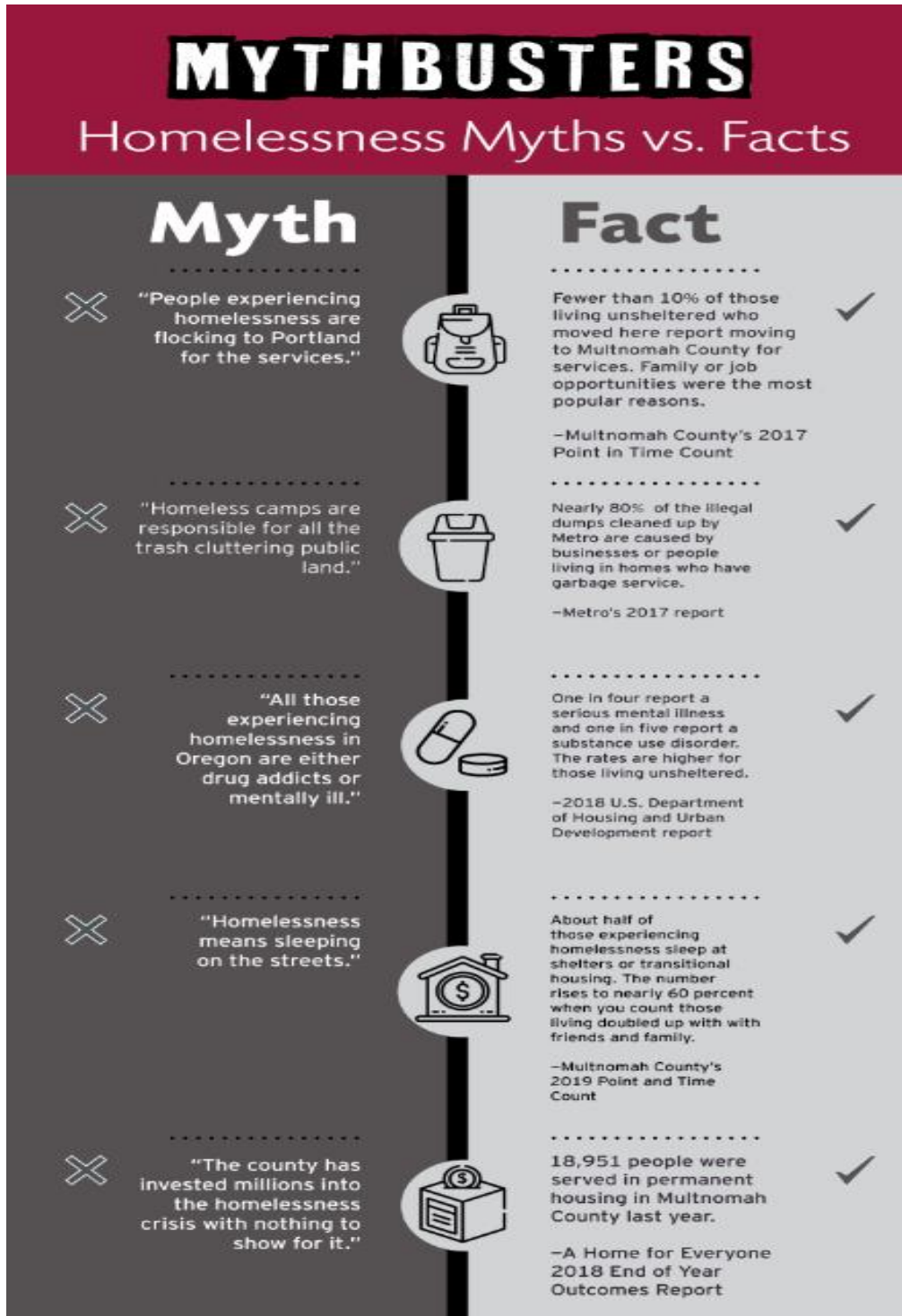


Figure 37: Infographic from Mythbuster Quiz²³²

²³² Ibid.

7.3. EXPERT OPINION

The following is a list of several expert studies and recommendations funded by various bodies regarding homelessness in Oregon.

Brown, K. & LaBar, J. (2018). Housing Policy Agenda: Housing Stability for Children, Veterans, and the Chronically Homeless and Increased Housing Supply for Urban and Rural Communities. State of Oregon, Office of the Governor Kate Brown.

- \$370 million in state funding to end homelessness among children, veterans, and chronically homeless
- Accelerate growth of housing supply including Permanent Supportive Housing

Chanay, J., Desai, N., Luo, Y., Purvee, D. (2018). An Analysis of Homelessness & Affordable Housing Multnomah County, 2018. Portland State University School of Business. Prepared for Oregon Harbor of Hope.

- Reduce barriers to affordable housing development
- Improve accuracy of homeless count
- Conduct cost of homelessness study for Multnomah County
- Promote home-sharing among baby boomers and retirees

Tapogna, J., Baron, M., & Mastromonaco, R. (2018). Homelessness in the Portland Region: A Review of Trends, Causes, and the Outlook Ahead. EcoNorthwest for the Oregon Community Foundation.

- Comprehensive framework of responses to homelessness covering regional housing production, programs serving low-income renters, interventions targeting homeless individuals, and the role of emergency shelters
- Accelerated housing production alone would make small reductions in likelihood of homelessness
- The true number of people who are on the verge of homelessness is difficult to predict
- Recommendations: look for best ratio of PSH to emergency shelters, identify populations PSH would serve most cost effectively, provide temporary rent subsidies, and increase affordable housing units

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Corporation for Supportive Housing, (2018). Scaling Smart Resources, Doing What Works: A System-Level Path to Producing 2,000 Units of Supportive Housing in Portland and Multnomah County.

Blumenauer, E. (2019). Locked Out: Reversing Federal Housing Failures and Unlocking Opportunity. The Office of Earl Blumenauer.

- One of the main causes for the national housing crisis is the lack of federal housing policies
- Generations of increasingly restrictive housing and zoning policies in addition to systematic reduction in federal funding for new construction had significant consequences, especially among communities of color and Native American populations
- Housing subsidies are concentrated to those who need them least, through programs like the Mortgage Interest Deduction program
- As the market fails to produce an adequate supply of housing, the federal government has ceased to be an active part of the solution

Citizens Crime Commission. (2019). Homelessness in Portland: A Meta-analysis and Recommendations for Success.

- Portland homeless crisis is a predictable result of 50 years of policy on housing, economics, crime, and mental health
- The Joint Office should continue homelessness prevention through housing retention, additional shelter resources, and growing stock of permanent supportive housing
- The City of Portland should instruct Parks Department to immediately open park bathrooms 24/7/365

Zapata, M.A., Liu, J., Everett, L., Hulseman, P., Potiowsky, T., and Willingham, E. (2019). Governance, Costs, and Revenue Raising to Address and Prevent Homelessness in the Portland Tri-County Region. Portland State University Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative.

- 38,000 people were homeless in 2017 in the tri-county area when considering the doubled-up population
- Part of PSU Homelessness Research and Action Collaborative (HRAC) which researches cause of homelessness, evaluates effectiveness of policy interventions, and uncovers innovative approaches to support individuals experiencing homelessness

8. HOUSING SOLUTIONS

8.1. PREVENTION AND DIVERSION

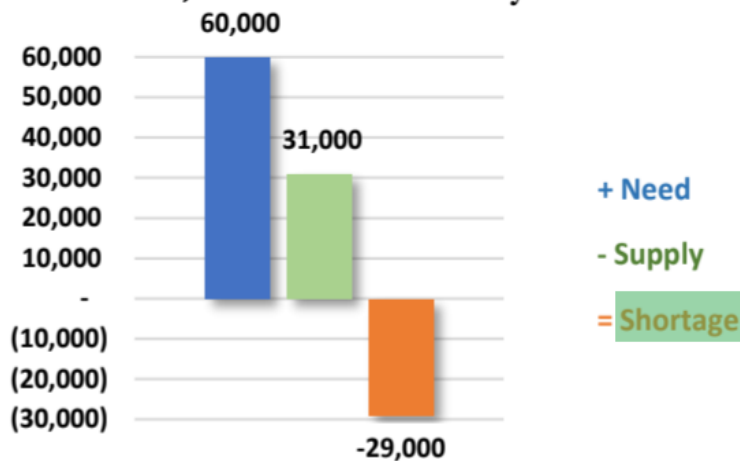
By far, the least expensive strategy to mitigate homelessness is developing strong prevention policies so that the high cost of remediation is not needed. This can be done, for example, by working with detention centers or using bankruptcy records and mortgage defaults. Another strategy is to provide better comprehensive services to those who need them most.

Multnomah County is working with others to fine-tune FUSE, the Frequent Users System Engagement program, to reduce public costs. FUSE identifies those who account for the greatest share of costs and targets them for housing resources with wrap-around services.²³³

8.2. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

There is a lack of affordable housing in Multnomah County. 29,000 more units are needed for families earning 50% Area Median Income (AMI), which is \$53,000/year and below.²³⁴ Recent research has attempted to estimate the price of more or less aggressive building scenarios to address the housing shortfall.²³⁵

Affordable Housing Needs among Households Earning 30-50% AMI, Multnomah County



Source: Oregon Metro Report, you Are Here, 2018
 *50% AMI (based on 2011 – 2015 figures)

Figure 38: Affordable housing shortage, 2018²³⁶

²³³ Interview, Meieran and Huizinga. (2019).

²³⁴ Chanay et al. (2018).

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

Four Time Scenarios to Address the 29,000 Affordable Housing Shortfall

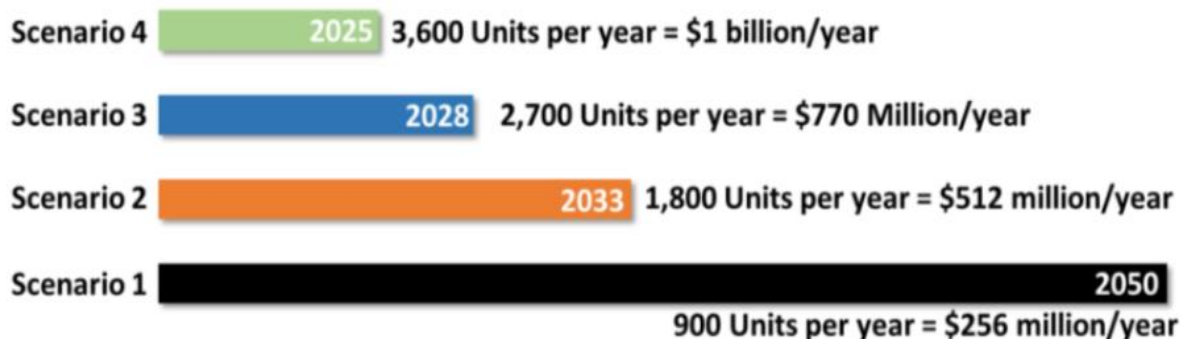


Figure 39: Suggested scenarios for addressing 29,000 affordable housing shortage²³⁷

8.3. PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING, ESPECIALLY FOR CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

The Joint Office of Homeless Services estimates that 3,700 units of supportive housing are in operation, 3,582 are permanent supportive housing and the rest are transitional recovery housing.²³⁸ Permanent supportive housing (PSH) provides rent assistance with no time limit and supportive mental health, substance abuse, counseling, and employment services.²³⁹ Multnomah County agreed to add 2,000 units of PSH by 2028.²⁴⁰ This would cost between \$592 and \$640 million over the next ten years. (HomeTogether estimates \$300 million per year over 10 years for support services.) Operating costs after the first ten years is estimated at \$47 million annually.²⁴¹

PSH includes supportive services to assist homeless individuals who have a disability to live independently. Supportive services are designed to meet the needs of participants and must be offered for the entire duration of program participation.²⁴² PSH may be single site, scattered site, or clustered, and can be integrated with affordable or market-rate units. Housing assistance can be project-based (tied to a unit) or tenant-based (tied to a specific applicant). Priority populations for PSH presently include the most vulnerable of chronically homeless individuals with one or more disabling conditions who have experienced long and/or repeated episodes of homelessness and/or are individuals that cycle in and out of institutions (ex. jails, hospitals, and other care facilities).²⁴³

Economists at EcoNorthwest remind us that a PSH assignment should be made in the most efficient way to treat the entirety of the homelessness issue.²⁴⁴ Support specialists within PSH

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Corporation for Supportive Housing, (2018).

²³⁹ Tapogna et al. (2018).

²⁴⁰ Corporation for Supportive Housing, (2018).

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Joint Office of Homeless Services. (2016). [Intergovernmental Agreement](#).

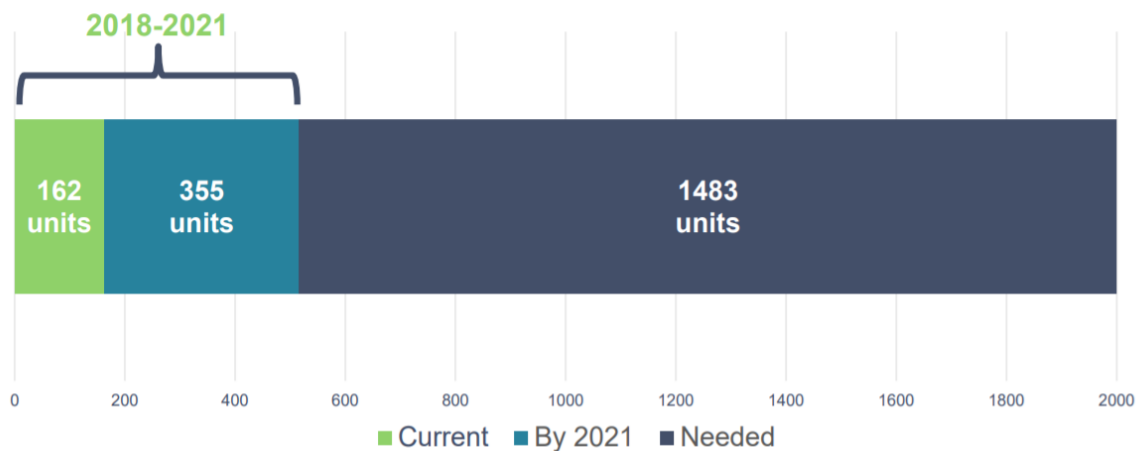
²⁴³ Corporation for Supportive Housing, (2018).

²⁴⁴ Tapogna et al. (2018).

can assist with housing location, subsidy applications, acquisition of household items, rent payment, tenant-rights assistance, conflict resolution, and community connections.²⁴⁵ These community-based services include peer support, outpatient behavioral health (mental and/or substance use), primary care, education, and employment assistance.²⁴⁶ Supportive housing can increase residential density through roommates, community living with shared kitchen space, and/or micro-apartments.²⁴⁷

“Tiny House” villages can act as transitional affordable housing, the main benefits being that they are cost efficient -- a couple thousand dollars per unit compared to hundreds of thousands to build traditional housing.⁵⁶ Dignity Village and Kenton Women’s Village in Portland are local examples. The Kenton Women’s Village is run by Catholic Charities who have been an important partner and service provider for supportive housing efforts on the local and national level.

Supportive Housing Goal – 2,000 units by 2028



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Figure 40: Supportive Housing Goals²⁴⁹

8.4. EMERGENCY SHELTERS

Emergency shelters provide temporary access to a crisis bed while providing a gateway to the preferred option of permanent housing.²⁵⁰ First, prevent housing loss by temporary subsidies. Until adequate shelter beds are available, sanctioned camping locations must be identified with the same amenities listed for shelters. Occupants of all shelters should be afforded:

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ City of Portland & Multnomah County. (2018). Smarter, Together.

²⁴⁹ City of Portland & Multnomah County. (2018). Smarter, Together.

²⁵⁰ Tapogna et al. (2018).

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- a. Continuing access to their shelter space
- b. Safe storage for personal belongings
- c. Sanitary facilities -- showers and toilets
- d. Personal and neighborhood security -- clean and safe surroundings
- e. Access to medical services and employment guidance.

There are 2,562 emergency beds available, but the 2019 PIT estimated 4,015 people experiencing homelessness, though the true number is estimated to be much higher. That leaves a significant deficit of at least 1,615 emergency beds. Since 2010, inflow to shelters exceeded outflows into permanent housing and visible, unsheltered homelessness increased.²⁵¹ A Home for Everyone's community plan calls for an expansion of emergency beds. The US Interagency Council on Homelessness showed that the Portland regions emergency shelter stays were shorter than the national median and average.²⁵²

Transitional, as opposed to emergency, shelters or housing are a component of a continuum of care and prepares people for permanent housing. The habitation is short-term, typically less than 24 months. Support for addiction, mental health, education, and job training may be included, to facilitate the move towards independent living. They can only be effective if affordable independent housing is available to move to afterwards.²⁵³ An example of an innovative emergency shelter is the River District Navigation Center, a project developed by Harbor of Hope. The recently opened navigation center provides many functions in one place, including food, shelter for 110 males, medical care, and social services.²⁵⁴ Because tenants can stay for up to 90 days, it provides some stability and centralized place to find resources. Harbor of Hope is also sponsoring two box trucks that will go out into the community and provide laundry, showers, and haircuts.²⁵⁵

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Gaetz, S. (2014). [*Coming of Age - Reimagining the Response to Youth Homelessness in Canada*](#). Homeless Hub Research Report Series.

²⁵⁴ The Portland Tribune. (2019). Our opinion: Homeless center is innovative step. May 21, 2019.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

2017 Housing Inventory Count	Emergency Shelter Beds	Transitional & Safe Haven Beds	Total Beds Available to Currently Homeless	Beds per 10,000 Population
Eugene-Springfield-Lane County CoC	475	96	571	15.4
Portland-Gresham-Multnomah County CoC	1,749	813	2,562	31.9
Medford-Ashland-Jackson County CoC	170	165	335	15.4
Central Oregon CoC	211	61	272	11.9
Oregon Balance of State CoC	1,390	1,185	2,575	17.0
Hillsboro-Beaverton-Washington County CoC	96	152	248	4.2
Clackamas County CoC	16	69	85	2.1

Source: ECONorthwest analysis of U.S. HUD 2017 Housing Inventory Counts.

Figure 41: Shelter Bed Availability for Currently Homeless Individuals across the State²⁵⁶

8.5. UNSANCTIONED CAMPSITES

Closing unsanctioned campsites is only ethically and legally possible once enough housing, sanctioned villages, shelters, and other creative options are available to those who are unsheltered. It must comply with the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals *Martin v. City of Boise* ruling which prohibits arrests – as cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the Eight Amendment to the U.S. Constitution – for occupying public spaces if there is no other place within the jurisdiction for the person to go.

8.5.1. Tacitly Permitted Unsanctioned Campsites

With the lack of permanent housing and shelter options, unsanctioned campsites have increased but are tacitly permitted. During May 6 – May 12, 2019, the City of Portland received 807 new unsanctioned campsite reports and identified over two hundred such throughout the city.²⁵⁷ The numbers have increased from June 2017, when 559 new campsite reports identifying 100 campsites through city.²⁵⁸ According to the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), the city saw 4,111 reports of abandoned RVs in 2016—up from 2,540 two years before.²⁵⁹

A substantial amount of time and resources have been allocated on clean-ups of these campsites, which has been criticized as an inefficient use of funds. In February 2016, Mayor

²⁵⁶ Tapogna et al. (2018).

²⁵⁷ City of Portland. (2019). [Weekly Campsite Report: May 6-12, 2019.](#)

²⁵⁸ City of Portland. (2018). [Weekly Campsite Report: August 6-12, 2018.](#)

²⁵⁹ VanderHart, D. (2017). RV Camping Has Exploded on Portland Streets. *Portland Mercury*. July 12, 2017.

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Hales enacted the Safe Sleep Policy, allowing those experiencing homelessness to camp on city property and sidewalks. The controversial policy was retracted six months later.²⁶⁰ Weekly sweeps continue to be a large part of the city's response to homelessness. Sweeps have increased from 6 per week in 2016 to over 50 per week as of May 2019.²⁶¹

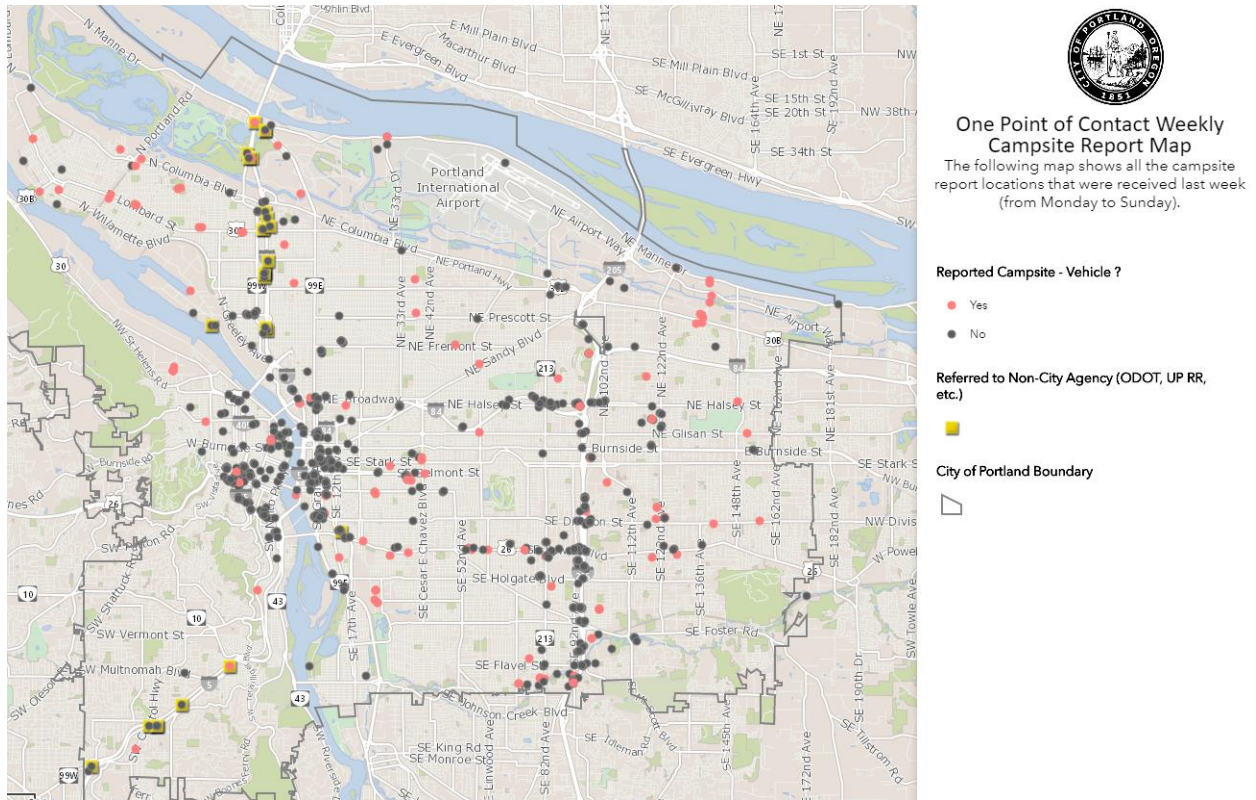


Figure 42: Unsanctioned Campsite Report Map and Number of Reports from May 6-12, 2019²⁶²

²⁶⁰ Smith, E. E. (2016). [Charlie Hales ends 'safe sleep' policy allowing homeless camping](#). August 2, 2016.

²⁶¹ Roth, S. (2017). Tent City, USA. KGW8. June 22, 2018.

²⁶² City of Portland. (2019). [Weekly Campsite Report: May 6-12, 2019](#).

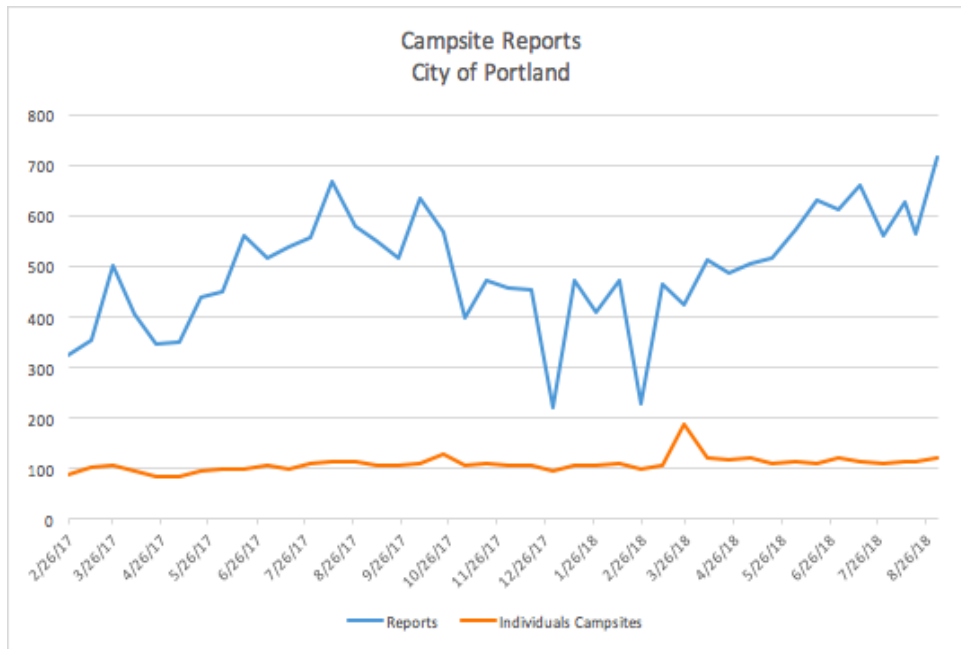


Figure 43: Campsite Reports and Individual Campsites²⁶³

8.5.2. Outreach to Campers

Central City Concern, Transition Projects Inc., and others are working in cooperation with the Portland Police and the Joint Office of Homeless Services to develop better outreach to people living in camps that will be closed. The Outreach Team concept requires multiple contacts to develop relationships and build trust among the campers. Their goal is to provide shelter and support services for those who accept it.

An example of successful outreach is the Eugene’s CAHOOTS system, in which behavioral health workers are dispatched with first responders to a call that involves someone who is unhoused. Councilor Hardesty’s 911-response pilot program to dispatch behavioral health workers with 911 calls is a like concept.

8.5.3. Cars as Shelter

In the Portland area, there are many families and individuals living in their cars. Many of these people are working. While the cars are moved frequently, programs such as the Community Transition School and the tracking system under the McKinney-Vento student tracking system provide information about some of these people experiencing homelessness and provides resources to keep a child in such situations in a single school throughout the school year. One of the big problems associated with caring for unsheltered populations is the limited amount of land available for shelter. Large sources of land in urban areas throughout Oregon are church parking lots. One hopes the commercial community will volunteer use of little-used space. Lane County has been working with car campers for many years.²⁶⁴

²⁶³ City of Portland. (2018). [Weekly Campsite Report: August 6-12, 2018](#).

²⁶⁴ St. Vincent de Paul. [Overnight Parking Program](#). Accessed Dec. 31, 2019.

8.6. REFERRAL CENTERS

Connecting people with resources needs to be accessible and readily available. An example of a primary local resource center for Portland is the Bud Clark Commons. Its mission is to connect people to resources, be open every day, provide access to bathrooms, showers, clothing, laundry, mail, registration lists for shelters and residential programs, ID assistance, a computer lab, and health clinic (and a dental clinic coming soon). The Harbor of Hope River District Navigation Center recently opened in the summer of 2019 and will provide street medicine, mobile laundry, and shower trucks. In addition to being an emergency shelter, the Navigation Center offers resources and referrals in a centralized location.

8.7. GROWING COST OF HOMELESSNESS

The most recent local study estimates 38,000 people experienced homelessness in 2017.²⁶⁵ They estimate that the cost to house and support this population will range from \$2.6 billion to \$4.1 billion over ten years.²⁶⁶ A breakdown of their study presents three scenarios for covering housing and services. Services alone account for \$825 million to \$910 million over a ten-year period.²⁶⁷ Around 15% of those experiencing homelessness will need permanent supportive housing.

²⁶⁵ Zapata et al. (2019).

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

Group	Population ¹³⁰	Resources	Costs
Total population experiencing homelessness (combined PSH ¹³¹ and Non-PSH)	38,263 individuals (or 24,260 households)	Housing construction and acquisition (one-time cost)	\$190,000–\$218,000 (0–1 bedroom unit) \$190,000–\$338,000 (2–4 bedroom unit)
		Rent assistance (per year)	\$11,352–\$18,960 (0–1 bedroom) \$14,904–\$41,000 (2–4 bedroom)
		Rent assistance administration (annual)	\$800 per household
		System support and employment services (annual)	\$450 per household
		Administrative costs (annual)	2.4%
With Permanent Supportive Housing Need	5,661 individuals (or 4,936 households)	PSH services (annual)	\$8,800–\$10,000 per household
Without PSH Need	32,602 individuals (or 19,324 households)	Services (annual)	\$5,700 per household
Total		\$2.6 billion– \$4.1 billion, or an average of \$107,000– \$169,000 per household (Net present value for ten years)	

Figure 44: Summary of Results for Homeless: Housing and Services²⁶⁸

Group	Population	Resources	Costs
Cost burdened (spend >30% of income on rent, earn <80% AMI ¹³²)	107,039 households (includes severely cost burdened, below)	Universal housing rent assistance	\$10.7 billion - \$21 billion (NPV ¹³³ , 2024-2033)
Severely cost burdened (spend >50% of income on rent, earn <80% AMII)	82,576 households	Universal housing rent assistance	\$8.7 billion - \$16.6 billion (NPV, 2024-2033)

Figure 45: Summary of Results for Universal Rent Assistance (Homelessness Prevention)²⁶⁹

There have been numerous other studies that have compared the costs of homelessness compared to providing housing solutions. Below is a table of the estimated costs of homelessness:²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Flaming, D., Toros, H., & Burns, P. (2015). Home Not Found the Cost of Homelessness in Silicon Valley.²⁷

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Organization/ Study	Annual Cost
HUD, 2002 study- estimated cost savings of \$16,281 per housing unit	\$40,000/ person
Phil Mangano- 65 cities of difference sizes and demographics	\$35-150,000/ person
Puget Sound Business Journal- costs by regional nonprofits, healthcare, and law enforcement in Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia	\$1B total
Portland non-profit (unnamed)	\$40-150,000/ person
Canadian Study- 30-50k homeless in Canada, costs of shelter, healthcare, social services, and corrections	\$7B total; \$87k/ person
Santa Clara County	\$3B total/ 5-yr period
OHA 2017-19 Biennial Medicaid costs:	\$9.4B/ year

More evidence is needed to show whether PSH is cost-effective in medical, criminal justice, and social service systems.²⁷¹ Potentially diverted costs through PSH:

- In-patient stay in Oregon State Hospital: \$888/night
- Emergency department: \$500/visit
- Multnomah County Jail: \$210/night
- Shelter housing: \$59-64/night

At the request of Vision Action Network, in 2013 the Northwest Economic Research Center (NERC) completed Phase One of “Emergency Service Provider Costs for Chronically Homeless Persons in Washington County Oregon.” The study analyzed the costs of participants during homelessness. Sixty percent of all service episodes were for medical services. In addition to the percentage of medical episodes being high compared to other service categories, the costs for these episodes also dominated costs in all other categories: medical costs were 81% higher than all costs in the other four service categories combined. As has been the case in other study locales, total medical costs decreased by more than 20% (\$123,623) for individual adults when they moved from homelessness into permanent, supportive housing.²⁷²

²⁷¹ Tapogna et al. (2018).

²⁷² Northwest Economic Research Center. (2013). [A Comparison of Emergency Service Provider Costs for Formerly Homeless Persons Living in Permanent Supportive Housing in Washington County, Oregon](#). Portland State University.

The City of Portland will significantly increase the amount of the city's budget that will be devoted to homelessness. Seven percent of the \$577.3 million general fund, \$38.5 million, will be on the homeless response.²⁷³ While an impressive investment, Mayor Ted Wheeler acknowledges that the response must be regional.

8.8. HOUSING FIRST

Housing First is a mantra for the goal of providing supportive housing as soon as possible, to create a place of stability from which to provide needed rehabilitative services. Many people who face homelessness have experienced trauma, have been unsuccessful in trying to find entry into the support system, or may not be currently capable of dealing with agencies and non-profit entities. Outreach personnel are likely to have talked to a range of people who are hesitant or reluctant to work with them, yet, a sudden incident, severe weather, or some other reason can arise that may change one's receptivity to help. This change in receptivity is known as the "treatable moment." Practitioners in the field tell us that this treatable moment requires, to the maximum extent practicable, an immediate response. Under Housing First, housing should be provided immediately in that treatable moment. Evidence from across the United States shows that if stable housing can be provided at the treatable moment, the chances of helping the person experiencing homelessness onto a course toward self-support are greatly enhanced. One Portland Police Response team reported to us that there is about a 10% success rate when providing overnight shelter vs. about a 70% success rate when providing a program that has a minimum stay of 60 days.

8.9. HOMESHARE

The idea behind HomeShare is that widows, older people and other empty nesters may have an extra room or two in their homes that they could make available for minimal rent to a person who is among the homeless or the working poor. It is estimated that there are more than 42,000 unused bedrooms in the Portland metro area.²⁷⁴ There are at least two programs in the Portland Area, EMO and Silvernest, to assist people willing to share a part of their homes with a room renter. A special property tax reduction is available to certain homeowners under SB 1045 of the 2019 Oregon Legislature. In order to assure such homeowners of their ability to control these spaces, no-cause evictions remain in place under SB 608 and Portland's eviction regulation ordinance. To obtain a larger number of HomeShare units, JOHS, Home Forward, the State Department of Housing and Community Development, EMO's Homeshare, and Silvernest need to bring the right homeowners and renters together on mutually acceptable terms.

²⁷³ Redden, J. (2019).

²⁷⁴ Bell, J. (2019). [Multnomah County short 30,000 units of affordable housing](#). Portland Business Journal. Aug. 13, 2018.

8.10. IMPROVE TRACKING

Tracking is a means of finding out about a person experiencing homelessness, what their situation is, what services they need, and who has provided services in the past. Many people report being frustrated with trying to contact support services because there is no follow-through or responsiveness at a treatable moment when they are seeking help. This results in cynicism about efforts to provide them with help. Further, because housing and support services are not delivered to unhoused people in an effective way, many use the various general systems that are at their disposal, such as emergency care, the 911 system, and emergency shelters, all very expensive from a societal point of view. The current system is fragmented. In the Portland area, JOHS, Home Forward (the Portland Housing Authority), and non-profit providers (e.g., Central City Concern and Transition Projects Inc. [TPI]) use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This system does include a database that authorized persons have access to. However, it does not include access to the medical and emergency care systems (EPIC), the Medicaid system, or the police homeless record keeping system. Apparently, it also does not contain the results of the federal McKinney-Vento student homelessness survey results and actions taken. Further, it does not contain the court records on upcoming eviction trials. Merging these systems poses legal difficulties centered around privacy, which will have to be addressed and resolved. In addition, the EPIC software system used by many healthcare providers is very complex and apparently not easily integrated into any other system. Further, there is a strong intent not to criminalize homelessness per se. Notwithstanding these difficulties, integrating these systems could reduce societal costs and better help those experiencing homelessness. Some progress is being made. For example, the Oregon Health Authority (Medicaid) and the Oregon Department of Human Services are developing a joint tracking system, the Integrated Resources Management System.²⁷⁵

All the foregoing shows the looming need of funds to properly address homelessness -- literally to save our communities. The question, of course, must be, "Where are such resources?" One witness, the head of a major homeless service provider in Portland, told us, after being invited to list the principal cause or causes of homelessness, that, "There is a single primary cause, it is the maldistribution of wealth we have experienced in the build-up in our economy." This is a phenomenon explained by Piketty as the inevitable result whenever the rate of return on personal investment, r , is greater than g , the general rate of growth, thus rewarding investors ahead of workers.^{276 277}

²⁷⁵ Oregon Audits Division. (2019). [Integrated eligibility project has generally followed industry standards to help ensure data is converted completely and accurately](#). October 2019.

²⁷⁶ Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Harvard University Press, 532.

²⁷⁷ Badger, I. & Quealy, K. (2019). [Big Cities Have Prospered but Inequality Has Soared](#). New York Times. Dec. 3, 2019.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS, IN DETAIL

The sponsors applaud and embrace many of the observations and conclusions reached by the major studies referenced in this report. Reflecting on their deliberations and our research, we have developed the following recommendations to highlight our specific priorities for action.

9.1. Educate the public that homelessness is, foremost, an economic event, not a choice.

It is clear that there needs to be more education around the systemic causes of homelessness, increased understanding that many among us are at risk of losing homes, and public buy-in from all citizens to support and look for solutions to the crisis.

The lessening or outright prevention of homelessness needs to address upstream factors, requiring public education and support. When economic conditions compound and homelessness occurs, an individual or family becomes at higher risk for cascading health and economic challenges. It becomes harder to establish housing and access resources. Treatment for mental health and addiction is difficult to access and poorly covered by insurance. One may begin to lose hope. Therefore, every systemic attempt must be made to stop homelessness before it starts.

Public officials must be transparent and forthright. There needs to be more candor regarding the depiction of the challenge of homelessness, including frank discussions on the full cost and the extent of the resources needed to confront it. When the public fully understands the required resources to fully address the crisis, it can begin to back comprehensive and smart plans. Elected officials should adhere to facts and avoid misleading the public in terms of the scope and magnitude of the housing crisis. This will help to restore public confidence in leadership, as trust is hard won, but easily lost. Finally, public officials should help the public understand the legal restraints in dealing with people experiencing homelessness.

The key to understanding and supporting homeless services and action is vastly improved public information regarding the scope of the problem and the true cost and efforts needed. Seattle's situation and experience are similar to Portland's. There, civic-minded corporations have underwritten efforts by the Seattle Times to continually report on homelessness, government programs, and civic engagement. The Oregonian would be well advised to follow suit. Other means of encouraging citizen participation is through community organizations, religious institutions, service clubs, and other groups where volunteer efforts are recognized and rewarded.

9.2. Prevent or lessen homelessness by anticipating it and acting to intercept those at risk.

It is necessary to anticipate and intervene in situations by determining who are at high risk for losing their homes. Establish a database, procedure, funds and staffing to prevent homelessness before it happens. Homelessness is destabilizing to the individual and the family. Several potential sources are possibly available regarding persons and families at risk of homelessness. One is the court system where evictions and mortgage foreclosure notices may

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be filed. Another is the Federal McKinney-Vento law which requires every school district to identify and track students facing homelessness in order to assure that they can continue attending their schools. A common database that identifies the at-risk person or family and has the resources along with the funds and staffing to respond would provide preventive service and save public money. Homelessness is destabilizing to the individual and the family. It increases risk of physical and mental health complications and substance misuse. Further, keeping a person in their own home may merely require a bridge payment for rent or a mortgage payment while the person is unemployed or medically unable to work.

9.3. Build permanent housing with supportive services (PSH).

The most visible and challenging homeless populations are those chronically burdened by mental and physical health and addiction issues. We endorse plans to fund and build 2,000 units for the chronically homeless -- but the implementation schedule of ten years is too long. 12,388 Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units are needed for all of Oregon. There must also be significant changes in the delivery and funding for mental health and supportive services from current practice.

9.4. Support HereTogether's campaign for an annual Portland area tax for support services and operating costs.

Discrete new funding sources from state and local government will be necessary to address the growth of the unanticipated cost for homeless and housing services. Metro, in accordance with HB 2003 (2019), should immediately estimate the future growth of homelessness in the region and identify strategies to provide adequate housing and shelter, the funding mechanisms required, and an implementation schedule consistent with the growing urgency. Until citizens are convinced there are viable plans to address the visible impacts of homelessness, support for new initiatives and funding will be disappointing. Support HereTogether to pass a financial support system that provides new, consistent yearly funding for supportive services for those experiencing homelessness and those at-risk. The target needs to be \$300 million a year over 10 years. This includes housing assistance, mental health and addiction services, care-management services, job training and placement, rental subsidies, and last, security for everyone, from those experiencing homelessness to the rest of the community.

9.5. Provide 24,000 more units of affordable housing (29,000, less bonding for 1,300 being provided by Portland and 3,900 by Metro) in the Metro area.

We have 40,000 new residents move to Portland each year. Priority should be on meeting Oregon's shortage of affordable units. Shelters and camping are no substitute for permanent housing and are far more expensive. A statewide study for housing planning, building sites, and funding schedule is imperative. Oregon should adopt and reform land use measures, reform zoning, relax impact fees, and increase spatial incentives to encourage the construction of affordable housing.

Oregon needs 30,000 new housing units of housing per year indefinitely for the foreseeable future to ameliorate the housing crisis. This includes exploring all sorts of options for housing, from Homeshare, co-housing, tiny homes, etc., to sanctioned camping. Oregon should rethink creative options for meeting shelter requirements while waiting for permanent housing. Each

county/community must have adequate facilities for safety and health and provide social services and resources to meet the needs of that community. Ideas include:

1. Tiny Home Villages
2. Sanctioned campsites or villages with self-governance
3. Oregon National Guard-provided emergency shelters
4. Sites nominated by each neighborhood throughout the region
5. Identify large underused properties, e.g. Wapato and adjacent lands
6. Encourage “empty-nesters” to rent spare rooms at affordable rates with at-will termination rights. Tap into the estimated 42,000 unused bedrooms in the Portland area through HomeShare
7. Create contest among designers and builders to design and erect innovative low-cost housing, with incentives sufficient to attract participation
8. Expand and grow more navigation centers with their support services that include 24-hour use, stay for at least 60 days, place for storage of gear, individual light and place to charge cell phones

To obtain a larger number of HomeShare units available, JOHS, Home Forward, the State Department of Housing and Community Development, EMO’s HomeShare and Silvernest need to bring the right homeowners and renters together on mutually acceptable terms.

Support systems should be robust enough that when a treatable moment is identified, the outreach team or other social service workers must, at that moment, be able to place the person into a shelter with support services and there must be sufficient space and services to allow the person to be placed in a single room occupancy situation as soon as possible. The Portland Police’s housing program can serve as a model and must be expanded to cover persons other than those facing arrest.

A successful response must be regional so that there are appropriate services where needed and homeless persons are not forced to make the difficult decisions to leave their communities for support services.

9.6. Prioritize support services for homeless families and children.

Oregon ranked as one of the worst states in the country for rates of unhoused children and youth in 2018. Oregon should continue to prioritize developing and increasing robust and specialized services that meet the needs of children and families. Schools should also be provided with better resources to support their at-risk and unhoused families. Schools are an institution that have already developed relationships with families and are poised to offer more effective, streamlined, and appropriate services or referrals.

9.7. Restore the rate of HUD housing funding to 7% of the Federal Budget, like it was in 1977.

Congress needs to join us in restoring federal funding for Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to 1970 levels. The precipitous decline in support and funding for public housing programs now constitutes a national emergency. With 25% of Oregonians at risk of losing their housing and similar conditions occurring across the country, only Congress has the capacity to

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address this growing threat. Absent federal action, Oregon's efforts alone can never meet the standard. The legislature should appeal to our Congressional delegation for action. With the bulk of federal housing assistance going to those with mortgage tax deductions, federal housing assistance continues to be dispersed inequitably and inappropriately, neglecting those who need housing assistance most. State initiatives will be insufficient without significant changes to federal funding and policy.

9.8. Add 2,400 emergency shelter beds in the Metro area.

The standard 2019 Point-in-Time survey for Multnomah County counted a total of 4,015 people experiencing homelessness. Of those, 2,037 were unsheltered. There must be shelters available for emergencies and for possible increases over some time period, e.g., 5 years. 2,400 additional beds should meet the anticipated need.²⁷⁸ Identifying suitable sites for shelters and camping is the most challenging priority for public agencies. Policymakers and social service organizations tread a fine line between providing the proper amount of shelter beds and the duration of assistance, all while directing resources to permanent housing solutions. Creative solutions will be needed to address the growing housing and homelessness crisis in the community. In order to not inundate Portland's homelessness services, other governments in the region must support their communities' growing housing crisis, as well. By re-allocating dollars, perhaps a more effective response can be taken to support more Oregonians.

9.9. Sanction more homeless camps, each of moderate size, to better promote safety and ease of management.

Until adequate shelter beds are available, sanctioned camping locations must be identified with the same amenities listed for shelters. Identifying suitable sites for shelters and camping is the most challenging priority for public agencies. Non-profit entities should facilitate and recommend such camps where the campers have developed self-organizations.

9.10. Provide immediate sanitation facilities for all sanctioned camps and public spaces.

Appoint a blue-ribbon committee to develop and gain community approval for immediate sanitation facilities and collections. Public hygiene includes public showers, laundry, trash collection, and storage of personal belongings for unhoused people. Local churches, schools, businesses, and other community partners should be enlisted to provide services. Funding implementation can include solicitation campaigns for private funds, volunteer lists, and the creation of public hygiene districts. Importantly, there needs to be significant education and outreach to reduce public fear around the "magnet-effect" of homeless services, if the community is to mitigate "nimbyism" and seek collaborative solutions within our neighborhoods and communities.

²⁷⁸ Joint Office of Homelessness Services. (2019). 2019 Point-in-Time Count.

9.11. Close all unsanctioned campsites, consistent with ethical and legal constraints.

Closing unsanctioned campsites is a goal but is only ethically and legally possible once enough housing, sanctioned villages, shelters, and other creative options are available to those who are unsheltered. The governments must assert public authority and management of sidewalks, parks, and other city property by systematic relocation of unsanctioned homeless camping to areas designated for this purpose. Reestablishing citizen confidence in the council's willingness and ability to safeguard these spaces is essential to Portland's reputation as a welcoming city for residents, businesses, and visitors. It must comply with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals *Martin v. City of Boise* case. The case holds that under the U.S. Constitution's 8th Amendment, it is cruel and unusual punishment to arrest a person experiencing homelessness for trespassing or other occupancy of public spaces, if there is no alternative place for the person to go in the jurisdiction.

9.12. Eliminate the need for Public Sweeps of campsites.

The existing practice of continuous sweeping of over 200 campsites is counterproductive and cynical. The sweeps mitigate against stabilizing this population as full participants in the life of the city. Sweeps disrupt employment efforts, continuity of medical attention, and the stability needed for productive assistance from support services. They create a risk of incurring major court challenges and judicial intervention in Portland's homelessness management efforts.

9.13. Strengthen the Joint Office of Homeless Services.

All the government entities and non-profit organizations we encountered are striving hard to fulfill their mandate but the sources of money and the specific programs they fund are siloed. The Joint Office should be expanded by interagency agreement to cover programs in Washington and Clackamas Counties. It should be charged with overall coordination, creating a dashboard for identifying the numeric needs and goals of each of the Point-in-Time identified groups affected by homelessness, and tracking a 10-year strategy to achieve the goals. It must invest more resources in record keeping and better data in order to streamline appropriate and effective interventions while limiting duplication of services. Public officials need to continue investing in comprehensive record and tracking systems within a reasonable timeline; it should include all persons who have been assisted and the nature and extent of public assistance provided.

9.14. Improve the tracking of persons experiencing homelessness, and of the housing and support services provided them.

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) must be expanded to cover the entire Portland region, including Clark County. Using waivers, determining who is certified for use, and adopting rules against misuse, HMIS needs to be integrated with the EPIC system and the Police tracking system. The Joint Office should pursue improved coordination with the Integrated Eligibility Project tracking system being developed by Oregon's Department of Human Resources (DHS) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). In addition, leads from the McKinney-Vento system for homeless students need to be integrated into the system to focus on preventing homelessness in the first place. Likewise, the 911 (emergency), 211 (non-

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emergency), and the Portland Responders systems need to be streamlined and integrated into the tracking system. Finally, there needs to be development of metrics to measure desired outcomes, with funding awards based on those outcomes. Coordination within the Portland SMSA, including Vancouver, is needed to increase housing availability regionally.

9.15. Interrupt and improve the criminal justice system's response to homelessness.

An inordinate amount of arrests is on people experiencing homelessness, costing the justice system a considerable amount of time and resources on a largely ineffective strategy. The response does not meet the needs of people in a mental health crisis and exacerbates the trauma already being experienced by those living on the streets.

One way to guide police response is to have persons trained in mental health crisis and homelessness accompany police. These trained professionals from other agencies may facilitate and assist police in supporting individuals, providing needed services, and preventing arrests. Expansion of the Portland Police Bureau's Neighborhood Response Teams (NRT) could prove effective. It is important that the police be given clear guidelines, resources, and expert partners from other organizations to respond effectively to people experiencing homelessness and the unique health issues that they may face.

9.16. Expand the use of Outreach Teams.

Present exemplary models are those provided by Transition Project, Inc. and Central City. In addition, we should expand and support TPI/CCC coordinated Navigation Team concept as well as Commissioner Hardesty's pilot program to improve our exiting 911 emergency procedures. We applaud the recent weekly sweep coordination meetings between support service providers and the Portland police.

9.17. Accelerate the housing strategy mandated by the 2019 legislature.

Using HBs 2001 and 2003 (2019 Oregon Legislature), the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department should, as quickly as possible, identify the State's housing needs with specific numbers and geographies over a 10-year period. Using the needs analysis, the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development should direct changes in local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances, to assure that each neighborhood within a land use jurisdiction has a proportionate share needed and assure designated outright use locations for: (1) shelters, (2) overnight parking for RV living spaces, (3) day use facilities for the homeless, (4) sanctioned homeless camping spaces, (5) sites for subsidized housing, and (6) middle income housing. Additionally, steps must be taken to prevent local entities from thwarting implementation of the above requirements by using evasive techniques, like onerous permits and high fees for teardowns (e.g., Lake Oswego) and designations of historical neighborhoods (e.g., Eastmoreland in Portland) to avoid the new regulations.

9.18. Use church parking and volunteered commercial open spaces for car camping for those who are experiencing homelessness.

Churches have real estate in the form of parking spaces. Working with the Joint Office, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and the non-profit, Leaven, should establish a goal for car camping spaces, such as an initial 300 spaces. They should then work with churches and unused shopping center parking to provide the safety, support, hygiene, and some storage for working people living in their cars.

9.19. Improve and expand mental health services.

The loss of both affordable housing and mental health institutions has led to an increase of people experiencing homelessness in a way that did not exist just decades ago. Complicating solutions for homelessness is the pervasive poverty experienced by over one million Oregonians. Oregonians are burdened by ever rising rental cost, difficult access to medical and mental health services, and the search for adequate employment made especially challenging if unhoused. The authors recommend that behavioral services, through the offices of the Oregon Health Authority, for Medicaid, and the Oregon Insurance Commissioner, for private and self-insurance, require treatment and payment parity comparable with other medical services, in terms of both treatment and compensation. All health insurance, both public and private, should not only be required to cover treatment for those suffering from addiction, but also provide payment for sufficient treatment periods (e.g. 4 to 6 months or longer) to address anxiety, depression, suicide, and addiction. They should also eliminate “carve outs” for mental illness in commercial, Medicare, and Medicaid insurance. We recommend the following:

1. Require medical healthcare systems to re-establish adequate beds and treatment regimens to match the needs of the community.
 - a. Improve the payments to those facilities, allowing them to expand psychiatric beds statewide to adequately match the needs.
 - b. Improve diagnosis and discharge options for their clients, which will permit improved access to State Hospital beds when needed.
 - c. Create and fund post-hospital discharge facilities for the mentally ill.
2. Require self-insurance plans in Oregon to provide parity coverage for behavioral health issues that arise while on the job, or within 90 days of discharge, for employees and their family members at a level of parity with any other illness.
3. Increase the supply of psychiatrists, case managers, and psychologists in Oregon, expand the student loan forgiveness (or pay-out for debt). In addition, provide coverage for both primary care and behavioral health in rural and underserved urban communities.
4. Require Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) to be trained to triage for psychological disorders.

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Measures need to be adopted that are designed to control the manufacture and distribution of opioids in the state. One way to implement such a measure would be to tax the manufacturer of opioids utilized in the State of Oregon, and each subsequent distributor thereafter.

The impediments to discharge from state hospitals must also be addressed, allowing new cases to be admitted when appropriate. Well-regulated, statewide mental health and addiction centers need to be created.

Finally, Oregon statutes should be amended to allow for the detention of the mentally ill if they are at risk to themselves. This allows for appropriate intervention when needed. The State of Washington's provision is an example to emulate.

9.20. Adopt a progressive tax on net worth to adequately fund solutions to the housing and homelessness crisis.

The increasing income and wealth inequality in our society will continue to accelerate the number of people experiencing homelessness throughout the United States and in Oregon if not abated. At present, the top 10% own more than 70% of the wealth in our country, and there has been a discordant rise of income in Portland of the top five percent since 1967, compared to the modest or virtually flat rise in the lowest 60%.²⁷⁹ This, alone, because of the disparity of disposable income, prices housing—owned or rented – beyond the reach of most of our neighbors. The problems of wealth and income inequality must be addressed, both nationally and locally. One approach is to impose an annual progressive tax in Oregon on net worth. If adopted, a good portion of the revenue from such a tax should be dedicated to combatting the causes and effects of homelessness. The criticisms of nay-sayers based on “failed” European trials with wealth taxes can be overcome by careful planning and administration. In furtherance of this idea, Oregon should adopt a Tax Disclosure Day, as Finland has done since the 19th century and Norway since 2005.²⁸⁰ Such a requirement provides an opportunity for the media to discover and report the general distribution of wealth in its society and to moderate inordinate wealth-gathering and granting.

Whether income or wealth is the better target for funding a revision of the general economic condition is certainly grounds for a healthy debate.

9.21. Create a Statewide agency to oversee all efforts directed towards homelessness.

There is no overall oversight of the various groups dedicated to this issue. That lack of organizational direction means many of the groups not only not coordinate, but compete, using valuable resources inefficiently. Hopefully, as with the Multnomah County Auditor for county budgets and the audit office of the Secretary of State as to state budgets, audits will be used to test the appropriateness and efficiency of homeless expenditures and be attended to. What cannot be measured cannot be managed.

²⁷⁹ Misliniski, J. (2018). [U.S. Household Incomes: A 51-year Perspective](#). October 16, 2018. Advisor Perspectives.

²⁸⁰ Barry, E. (2018). [Happy 'National Jealousy Day'! Finland Bares Its Citizens' Taxes](#). Nov. 1, 2018. New York Times.

9.22. Accept personal responsibility for ending homelessness.

All commentators concur that the complexity of the homelessness challenge is too vast and prolonged to be addressed without robust citizen engagement. Ultimately, the response to homelessness is a moral matter. It will never be possible for governments to solve all the problems of homelessness. Investors, financial institutions, developers, and homeowners need to use the available tax credits and other mechanisms to create affordable housing. As members of the public, all of us need to:

1. Lobby for 24,000 additional, affordable housing units
2. Support a new annual tax of about \$300 million for support services
3. Lobby for 2,400 additional emergency shelter beds
4. Crowdfund or otherwise contribute to the funds needed to meet Housing First requirements
5. Support a program for increased rental assistance in the upcoming short 2020 legislative session
6. Rent out that unused bedroom with a lease that allows no-cause evictions if it does not work out

10. WHY WE ARE CONCERNED

Because we live here.

GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

- ADU: Accessory Dwelling Unit
- AHFE: A Home for Everyone, the local advisory body (and homeless servers) to JOHS
- AMI: Area Median Income
- CHIP: the federal Children's Health Insurance Program
- Chronically homeless: Has been living unsheltered, in an emergency shelter, or in transitional housing for at least 1 year or on at least four separate occasions over the last 3 years that cumulatively add up to 1 year, and can be diagnosed with one or more disabling conditions (HUD)
- Demand-side approaches: Voucher programs that help low-income households compete in the private market for housing.²⁸¹
- Doubled up: Not part of HUD's definition of homelessness and refers to the living arrangements of individuals and families who are living in unstable shared-housing situations due to challenging economic or other circumstances.
- Emergency shelter: Any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless, and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements.
- HereTogether: A tri-county coalition dedicated to securing adequate funding for homeless services.
- Home Forward: The current name for what was the Portland Housing Authority.
- Home Share: A concept encouraging homeowners to rent out vacant rooms at an affordable rate.
- Housing First: A mantra for the goal of providing supportive housing as soon as possible, to create a place of stability from which to provide needed rehabilitative services
- HUD: United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
- HUD Point-In-Time: Count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January
- Inclusionary zoning: A requirement that new housing complexes must contain a certain percentage of low-income housing.
- JOHS: Joint Office of Housing Services (comprising Cities of Portland and Gresham, Multnomah County, and Home Forward)
- DLCD: Oregon Department of Land conservation and Development
- MFI: Median Family Income
- Navigation Center: A homeless shelter, usually barrier free, providing necessary services for a minimum period pending screening and the provision of further needed perceived services

²⁸¹ Tapogna et al. (2018).

- OHA: Oregon Health Authority
- OHCS: Oregon Housing and Community Services Department
- Outreach Team: A team of medical and behavioral health practitioners dispatched as part of the first responders to an apparent homeless or behavioral health emergency.
- Permanent supportive housing (PSH): Best practice and proven strategy to stabilize people experiencing chronic homelessness. PSH combines non-time-limited affordable housing with wrap around supportive services for people experiencing homelessness who also have disabilities.
- PHB: Portland Housing Bureau
- PPB: Portland Police Bureau
- PIT: Point in Time, an annual Homeless count required by HUD
- Rapid rehousing: Time-limited rental assistance and light case management. Theory used to decrease the number of homeless quickly, but not necessarily permanently.
- SMSA: Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area. Portland's is Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, and Clark Counties.
- SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Supply-side approaches: Public housing, project-based rental assistance, tax credits, and regulatory approaches that reduce the operational cost of affordable housing developments²⁸²
- Sweep: The term used by the homeless to describe the police practice of disrupting unsanctioned camps, forcing the inhabitants to move into formal shelter or to another unsanctioned site.
- Transitional housing: Housing, where all program participants have signed a lease or occupancy agreement, the purpose of which is to facilitate the movement of individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing within 24 months or such longer period as HUD determines necessary.
- Treatable moment: That stage when a homeless person appears to understand that they need and are willing to accept third party help to survive.
- Unsheltered: Individuals or families "with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or campground on the night designated for the count.

²⁸² Ibid.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEWS

Interview Impressions: those non-confidential are available upon request.

12/18/19	Home Forward's Director of Planning and Policy: Taylor Smiley Wolfe	Vetting & Housing and Land Use
12/16/19	Multnomah County's Joint Office of Homeless Services: Patricia Rojas	Vetting
12/12/19	PSU Homeless Collaborative's Marisa Zapata	Vetting
12/09/19	TPI's Tony Bernal	Vetting - Tracking
11/25/19	Here Together's Bob Stoll and Cole	Vetting & next steps
11/15/19	TPI's George Devendorf	Vetting
11/12/19	ECONorthwest's John Tapogna and Madeline Baron	Vetting
10/29 & 31/19	Homeless groups	Vetting
05/22/19	Tony Bernal, TPI Policy	Tracking
04/10/19	Tim Engstrom and Ryan Engweiler, PPB NRT Police officers	Homeless Camp Cleanouts
03/28/19	Meieran, Eisen, Fitts, others (Panel)	Breaking Mental Health Barriers
03/21/19	Addict Graduate	Reflections
02/18/19	George Devendorf, Director TPI	Public Toilets
02/15/19	Rep Mitch Greenlick	Homeless with Mental health Problems
12/03/18	Margaret Salazar	Housing supplied through State
10/31/18	Comm. Sharon Meieran	Multnomah County Mental Health
10/26/18	Patrick Allen, Director	Medicaid – Oregon Health Authority
8/16/18	Longtime Psychiatric Administrator	Flow of Money in Behavioral Health
05/02/18	Ed Blackburn	Central City Concern
11/27/18	William Olson, CFO PHS	Financing Medicaid
11/01/18	Debra Mason, Director CSC	Day Service to Homeless
08/14/18	Robert Gluckman, CMO, PHS	Behavioral Health Subcontracts
08/16/18	Administrative Supervisor	Unity and Outsourcing
08/02/18	Jack Friedman	Medicaid, Hospitals & Health Insurance
05/15/18	Trell Anderson	Catholic Charities Housing
05/04/18	Bob Stoll/David Bangsberg	Housing for the homeless
04/23/18	Leora Berry	CCC Behavioral Health Housing
10/12/17	George Devendorf	Group Path Forward