# Giving the Homeless Population a Chance to Become Healthier: An Initial Needs Assessment of the Homeless Population of Portland, Maine

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# **Situation** Perform needs assessment of the homeless population in Portland due to: Uncertainty of whether current services Goal provided are necessary or Determine are a priority for most important these needs of the individuals homeless community Lack of meaningful data to display efficacy of current efforts

Desire to improve student

prevention program for an

learning in developing a

underserved population

#### Inputs Outputs

What we invest:

program

Research

articles

Money

News articles

Video footage

collection

**Technology** 

**Partners** 

staff

community

Educational materials

Equipment for data

Online databases

Digital resources

UNE students, faculty, and

Stakeholders, Portland

Submission of IPEC grant

and implementation of a

Review of scholarly journal

sustainable prevention

Organization, development,

Time

## **Participation**

# **Outcomes – Impact**

#### **Short Term Medium Term** Long Term

Increased

transfer of

knowledge and

communication

between UNE

relationship /

collaboration

between UNE

Portland

Improved

community

organizational

functioning

stakeholders

members in

ergonomics

strategies to

to services,

identify them,

and implement

improve access

and staff

Acquire

them

Train

disciplines,

#### What we do Who we reach

- Collaborate with
   Stakeholders: 10 stakeholders
- Conduct interviews with stakeholders
- Coordinate meetings between
- professions Provide education on current available services
- Develop, enhance, and expand current services
- Assess what is being done and areas for improvement
- homeless shelters, food pantries. government officials, community partners, healthcare providers, employment
- programs, etc. Homeless individuals
- UNE community: healthcare professional students and
- staff members Greater Portland community

- Establishment of collaborative relationships and networks
- Improved assessment of organizational/st akeholder needs relevant to promote support and implementation of interventions
- Acquired knowledge and awareness of the impact UNE students have on various stakeholder establishments
- Gained understanding of **UNE** student involvement

- Provide on-going services to the homeless population in need as well as stakeholders
- faculty, and staff Improved health Implementing a outcomes of individuals who are homeless with better and the greater access to services
  - Impact of educational interventions and support on
  - quality of life Educational impact on UNE students involved
  - Cultural humility

### **Stakeholders interviewed:**

- Community Policing Coordinator
- Homeless Voices for Justice
- Milestone Foundation
- Opportunity Alliance
- Portland Community Health Center
- Portland Housing Authority
- Portland Police Department
- Portland Public Library
- Preble St. Resource Center
- Stepping Stones

## Summary of the greatest needs of the Homeless gathered from stakeholder

### interviews

- Housing
- Substance Abuse Services
- Mental Health Services ■ Case Management
- Funding
- Job Opportunities ■ Women's Services
- Dental ■ General Health Care
- Liveable Minimum Wage
- Smoking Cessation
- Better Locations for Services Skill Development Services
- Handicap Accessibility





Homeless Voices for Justice Advocates, Jeff and Jim, and Joseph McNally from Milestone all provided invaluable insight into the needs of the Homeless and those that serve them.

[The greatest unmet needs of the homeless population:] "Philosophically: empathy. I don't think anyone sets out with a life goal to be homeless. But we have an incredible culture of blame and shame." Paul Golding, Stepping Stones.

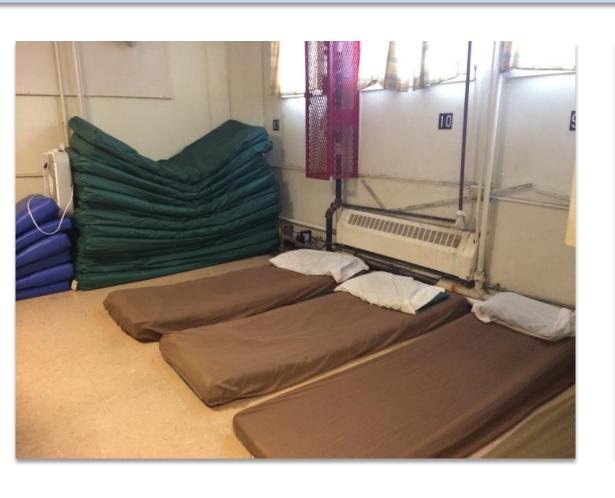
Through the future programs developed from the needs assessment, we aim to empower UNE health professionals with cultural sensitivity and the social responsibility to improve the health and wellness of those that are underserved in our communities and those that serve them.

Funding: Interprofessional Education Collaborative Mini-Grant.

# **Proposed Intervention #1:**

Bimonthly student-run labs and information sessions:

- Tailored toward the needs of the employees at Milestone Emergency Shelter & Preble St. Resource Center focusing on workplace safety and health.
- Example: proper body mechanics when moving shelter beds and assisting clients when using shelter facilities.
- (Shelter sleeping palettes, pictured to the left, present an injury risk to employees and clients.)



# **Proposed Intervention #2:**

Second Homeless Needs Assessment:

- Students will directly survey individuals within the Homeless population at each shelter.
- Sample size will be 100 (~ 6% of the population)
- The data will be analyzed with the initial assessment to inform future interventions.

# Proposed **Interventions #3:**

Compile volunteer opportunities within the homeless community, both health service and non-health service related, in order to promote volunteerism at UNE.