

BARRIERS TO CREATING AND ACCESSING AFFORDABLE
HOUSING IN PORTLAND, OREGON

by

MAX WEISENBLOOM

A THESIS

Presented to the Department of Architecture
and the Robert D. Clark Honors College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Architecture

June 2023

An Abstract of the Thesis of

Max Weisenbloom for the degree of Bachelor of Architecture
in the Department of Architecture to be taken June 2023

Title: Barriers to Creating and Accessing Affordable Housing in Portland, Oregon

Approved: Justin Fowler, Instructor/Director, Portland Architecture Program
Primary Thesis Advisor

Portland, similarly to the rest of the country, is experiencing a housing crisis. Rising rents, low housing stocks and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have combined to produce record numbers of people experiencing housing insecurity, eviction, and homelessness. While new funding has recently been approved in response to this crisis, how that money is spent and used will determine its success. Through conversations with architects, service providers, and people experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness, this study aims to ground existing housing data in people's real-world experiences.

Housing insecurity is experienced differently by everyone. Because of the deep intersections houselessness has with disability, mental health, addiction and other factors, it is impossible to define a single path either out of or into housing. However, the struggles of Portland's current housing situation can be broadly characterized into two groups: An inability to prevent people who are housed from losing their homes, and a failure to rapidly rehouse and support those who have. What follows are the some of the ways people experience Portland's housing systems, and the barriers they face to becoming housed.

Acknowledgements

Firstly and most importantly, I would like to thank all of the individuals who took part in this study for sharing their experiences and expertise. Many of the people interviewed were living without shelter, in unstable housing, or in other vulnerable situations.

I would like to thank my advisor Justin Fowler for over a year of advice and support in conducting this research. I would also like to thank Elisandra Garcia for her mentorship through this year, and Casey Shoop for providing years of knowledge and support through the Clark Honors College.

The organizations that I interviewed were incredibly generous for donating their time, expertise, and experiences. These organizations in alphabetical order are:

Blanchet House of Hospitality	Path Home NW
Bud Clark Commons	Portland Street Response
HOLST Architecture	Scott Edwards Architects
Home Forward	SERA Architecture
Lifeworks NW	Street Roots
Our Just Future	

Finally, I would like to thank the University of Oregon IRB, who were very helpful in designing this study and providing rapid advice and responses to the time tables.

Table of Contents

Author's Note	5
Introduction	6
Existing Literature	9
Research Questions	14
Methods	15
Research Population	15
Recruitment Methods	16
Compensation / Reimbursement	17
Interviews	18
Survey Results	24
Discussion – Chapter 1: Precipitating Factors	26
1.1 – Eviction:	28
1.2 – Property Management Companies, Maintenance, and Mismanagement:	32
1.3 – Case Management:	36
1.4 – Funding and Dispersal of Existing Funds:	38
Chapter 2: Falling Through the Cracks	43
2.1 Employment	46
2.2 Disability & Mental Health	48
2.3 Shelters & Other Services	52
2.4 Violence	57
2.5 Case Workers	62
Conclusions	67
Appendices	70
Appendix 1: Consent for Research Participation	70
Appendix 2: Questionnaire	71
Appendix 3: Promotional Materials	73
Bibliography	74

List of Figures

Figure 1: People experiencing chronic & total homelessness per Point In Time Counts	28
Figure 1: Length of time since individuals were in stable housing, by year. The share of chronically homeless individuals has been increasing over time.	44
Figure 2: Length of time spent in Portland by housing type. Unsheltered individuals on average had been in the city the longest.	45
Figure 3: Place of origin of houseless individuals in 2022. Nearly two thirds of people reported being from Multnomah County, while less than 25% of people traveled from outside of Oregon	46
Figure 4: Deaths of houseless individuals by type, 2015-2021. Most deaths were drug or alcohol related, either as a direct result of an overdose or as a contributing factor.	52
Figure 5: Rates of disabled individuals in shelters are consistently low	55
Figure 6: Comparison of the living situation of disabled houseless individuals by the four most common disabling conditions and their combinations. The columns note the percentage of respondents with the condition, while the points represent how common the disability is in a shelter compared to the general houseless population.	56
Figure 7: Homicides in Portland by year & housing status. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of homicides has increased both among houseless individuals and the public overall. While those that are homeless make up only about 1% of the population, they consistently account for over 15% of annual homicide victims.	58
Figure 8: Campsites swept between Nov. 2021 and Nov. 2022.	60
Figure 9: Percentage of Section 8 Voucher recipients who moved to a high opportunity neighborhood by amount of personal support given	64

Author's Note

When I first began this research, I was originally set on ideas around how Architecture and Urban Design affected the experiences of those living on the street. Indeed, my Design thesis that forms a partnership with this work is focused expressly on that. There are many valuable ideas to explore around the ways that hostile architecture directly creates harm to people without housing, and how trauma-informed design can directly mitigate some of those harms. This research is still very much conducted from the viewpoint of Architecture and Urban Design, and the design of the built environment is extremely important in mitigating and removing stressors and obstacles that people without homes face on a daily basis. However, the lives of the people who use designed space do not stop when they leave that space, nor does their vulnerability to becoming traumatized or the possibility of them finding support. Even for individual buildings, a large part of their success depends more on the types of services provided and the ways in which they are implemented than the care that was taken in perfecting the design. Dave Otte, a principal at HOLST Architecture, describes the importance of architects to be advocates in their field. This means not only advocating for issues to politicians and other architects in their spare time, but perhaps more importantly to the developers and owners of the building they themselves are designing. If a non-profit or the city itself comes to an architect to design a building that minimizes the harms caused to homeless individuals, they should be prepared to advise both on how the building can be designed *and* how it can be used. Buildings and services must be integrated into the wider community and city. Understanding how they interact with any person that the project might serve is not just an important, but an essential part of the process.

Introduction

The United States is experiencing a housing crisis. A lack of homes, and particularly affordable homes, has pushed over 30% of households to be rent or mortgage burdened, defined as spending over 30% of their income on housing¹. In Portland, OR, the lack of affordable housing is especially hard felt. Since 2010, only 8.5 new residences have been constructed for every 10 new households that have moved into the city². The effects of COVID-19 have exacerbated the crisis, with job loss and soaring rents forcing many to lose their homes.

Cities such as Eugene and Portland are especially susceptible, where the gap between the median income and average cost of living is among the highest in the country³. A January 2022 Point In Time (PIT) count in Multnomah County found 5,228 people that met the federal definition of homelessness, a 30% increase over the 4,015 and 4,177 people counted in 2019 and 2017 respectively⁴. Historically, cities have tried to combat issues of affordability by building additional, cheaper housing on less expensive land, usually in the suburbs or other less developed areas. However, while this enables the average rent to be lower, their location often means that amenities such as public transportation, easily accessible food, community organizations, and a diverse job market are scarce or absent entirely. Not only does this lower the standard of living but causes other expenses such as travel to increase in order to compensate. There is a need for affordable housing to be built in decent neighborhoods with jobs, amenities,

¹ “Millions of Renters Fall Short of a Comfortable Standard of Living | Joint Center for Housing Studies,” <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/millions-renters-fall-short-comfortable-standard-living>.

² “2020 Housing Affordability Report | Value of Jobs,” <https://portlandalliance.com/advocacy/2020-housing-affordability.html>.

³ Aurand et al., “Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing 2021.”

⁴ “NEWS RELEASE.”

and services. The maxim that it is expensive to be poor is as true in architecture and urban design as it is in other parts of life.

Traditional approaches to affordable housing have excluded the input of the people who need it the most from their design and development, and as a result have produced neighborhoods segregated by income, race, and ethnicity. Simultaneously, the draw of wealthier people from out of state raises the demand for more expensive housing to be built, leaving few developers that want to build cheaply. When middle-class people are pushed into smaller homes, they displace the lower middle class and residents hovering around the poverty line into increasingly poor conditions and often into homelessness.

As the housing crisis has worsened, it has also become increasingly visible. Concentrations of homeless encampments are around Old Town and 82nd avenue where there are concentrations of services and a lower chance of being stigmatized or swept. Today, walking through Old Town, tents, tarps, and shopping carts are common sites. The foot traffic is lower than the neighboring Pearl District and central Downtown, and less affluent. At night, the bars and clubs are well occupied, however few of the late night businesses have an active street presence. Old Town Portland has always been a center for those without homes. Blanchet House of Hospitality first opened in 1952, providing housing and food for those who could not afford it⁵. In recent years however, the increased presence of people living in tents or on the sidewalk has reduced foot traffic in the area and shuttered many businesses⁶. Public outcry over the number of homeless people on the streets and tent cities has come from both those concerned for those sleeping on the streets, as well as home and business owners who want to see them gone from their neighborhoods irrespective of the method. Solutions to this affordability crisis have

⁵ “About Us.”

⁶ Friedman, “In Portland’s Old Town Chinatown, a \$57 Million Rebirth Promise Broken.”

been at the forefront of political discussion in the city: In 2020, the Portland Metro area passed a bond measure aiming to raise \$2.5 billion over a ten year period to fund homeless services⁷. Some politicians, such as former mayor and mayoral advisor Sam Adams, have proposed gated camps of sheds to house the thousands of unsheltered Portlanders.⁸ Meanwhile, the frequency of tent sweeps has been steadily increasing for the past year. Such solutions are often focused more on “cleaning up the city” and reducing the appearance of homelessness than providing shelter to those in need.

However, there is a deficit of studies centered around the perspectives of those with unstable housing. Through conducting open-ended interviews with both people in charge of and used by current housing assistance programs, this study aims to fill the research gap to include the lived experiences of those living on the streets.

⁷ “Tax to Fund Homeless Services in Portland Metro Area Passes.”

⁸ “Memo Suggests Mass Shelters in Portland Staffed by National Guard.”

Existing Literature

Housing affordability is an issue that affects most people at some point in their lives. As of 2020, 11.4% of Americans, or 37 million people, lived below the federal poverty line.⁹ For most families living on less than \$12,000 a year per person, the majority of their income goes to housing. Renters often spend above 50% of their income on rent, leaving little for critical needs such as health insurance, food, transportation, and education. Those supporting children or other dependents are even more severely cost burdened. Mortgages tend to be lower than rental costs for an equivalently sized home, but as of 2023, 48% of low income renters are cost burdened, spending over 30% of their income on rent. Among very low-income renters, the vast majority (77%) are cost burdened, while 34% spend over half of their income on rent¹⁰. Homeowners tend to have proportionately lower housing costs. Portions of mortgage payments can be written off on tax returns, and because mortgage payments remain at the levels they were at when the owner took out the loan, they are more insulated from spikes in the housing market than renters are, who typically receive an annual rent increase. The average household income of homeowners is also much higher at \$86,000, compared to \$42,000 per year for renters.¹¹ Yet, among low income homeowners, a significant portion remain cost burdened. In 2022, over 20% of homeownership households spent over 30% of their income on homeownership costs, while 9% spent over half of their income.¹² The vast majority of households who are cost burdened or extremely cost burdened are low income. Income inequality, and the stratification of wealth across races, genders, and classes are precursors to homelessness, without which this study would not be necessary.

⁹ Bureau, “National Poverty in America Awareness Month.”

¹⁰ Aurand et al., “The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes.”

¹¹ Bureau, “Income in the United States.”

¹² “The State of the Nation’s Housing 2022.”

When discussing housing and inequality in the United States, it is impossible to ignore the effects of racism and the racialized class system that existed for most of our history. Through practices such as redlining and other forms of legal and social discrimination, the amount of wealth owned by Black and Indigenous Americans is far lower than their white counterparts. In Portland, they have half the rate of homeownership as the population overall, higher poverty rates, higher levels of rent and mortgage burden, and higher levels of housing and job insecurity.¹³ In large part because of this, Black Portlanders have three times the average rate of homelessness, while Indigenous Portlanders have thirteen times the average rate¹⁴.

The most visible sign of housing inequality is homelessness. There are many concurrent causes for homelessness: Economic decline, job loss, mental health issues, drug addiction, family struggles, and discrimination all play important roles. However, while there is much outrage in cities across the country over the increasing number of people experiencing homelessness, there is heated disagreement over both the cause and potential remedies: Some residents believe the crisis is the fault of lax rules permitting dangerous delinquents to live on the street while others see the problem as one of insufficient resources and want further investment in the community.

For people struggling to find a place to live, there is often a high barrier to entry back into the housing market. Without a stable place to live, finding a job can prove to be a difficult task. Things as simple as being able to shower are essential to making a good impression and securing employment. Frequent relocation, experienced both by the chronically homeless and those with unstable housing, disrupts their lives and can impact the mental health of those living on the streets. Finally, most jobs require a home address or place of residency as part of their

¹³ Beddow, “2022 State of Housing in Portland.”

¹⁴ Elliott and Oschwald, “2022 Point In Time Count.”

application process or count a person's history of evictions or crimes related to desperation against them.

Even if a person experiencing homelessness is able to secure a job, the possibility of finding affordable housing is not guaranteed. Colburn and Aldern, authors of a study on the prevalence of homelessness in different American cities, use the example of musical chairs to explain the disparity between the availability and demand for affordable housing: A group of children are playing musical chairs. When the music stops, Greg, who is on crutches, is unable to get to a chair before the rest of the kids.¹⁵ The question is, why is Greg not in a chair? It is tempting to blame Greg's chairlessness on his broken leg, just as many blame homelessness on poor mental health services, drug abuse, and other societal structures. These factors are very important and play a large role in who is able to secure affordable housing, however it is the lack of affordable homes, just as it is the lack of chairs, that is the largest factor that determines why so many are left to live on the streets or bounce between the couches of friends.

In recent decades there has been a concerted effort in many countries to decrease the number of homeless living on the streets. Laws such as New York City's Right to Shelter mandate, and programs like London's No Second Night Out connect those sleeping rough to resources such as families, shelters, and housing assistance organizations and are beneficial for providing the chronically homeless a place to sleep at night.¹⁶ However, these temporary measures don't address the larger problem of housing affordability, and often siphon money away from permanent housing solutions and other services. Many non-profit organizations such as PathHomeNW focus their resources on permanent housing and support specifically because city, state and federal funds are rarely spent on permanent solutions:

¹⁵ Colburn and Aldern, Homelessness Is a Housing Problem.

¹⁶ "The Spike; Homelessness in London."

New York is our cautionary tale that we always think about when elected officials come to us and they ask, ‘should we do right to shelter?’ And we all say no, please do not ever do a right to shelter, because it just drains all the money. Prevention gets no money. Housing gets no money, services get no money because shelter takes all the money.¹⁷

To prevent new construction catering solely to more profitable luxury apartments, Oregon passed an Inclusionary Zoning law in 2016 mandating that new construction must build 15% of their units at a price affordable to families under 80% of the Median Family Income (MFI), or 10% of their units for families under 60% MFI. However, loopholes in the law permit these units to either be built off site or not built at all in exchange for the developer paying a fee.¹⁸ This further segregates the city by income, and concentrates people living below the poverty line in areas underserved by public transportation, grocery stores, and other essential amenities.

There are a myriad of factors affecting affordability in places where people live. Though housing is the single largest cost for most American households, transportation, food, and entertainment are also significant costs and vary depending on the neighborhood in which they live. Aurand argues that affordable housing advocates and developers must take into account these factors to make sure that providing affordable cost of living is truly possible where low income housing is built. In dense urban areas, rent, food, and entertainment costs tend to be high, however they often have high quality public transportation and walkable streets, making transportation costs much lower. On average, Americans spend nearly as much on transportation as on food and entertainment combined.¹⁹ Even so, while the neighborhood park and elementary school might be close enough to walk, affordable food and available jobs often requires traveling out of the city center itself.²⁰

¹⁷ Brandi Tuck, Executive Director Path Home NW. Interviewed by author January 2023.

¹⁸ “Inclusionary Housing.”

¹⁹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021.

²⁰ Aurand, “Density, Housing Types and Mixed Land Use.”

Increasing the total amount of affordable housing, and better integrating it and spreading it out throughout the city is essential to remedying the housing crisis long term, even while short term solutions, harm reduction, and barriers to individuals obtaining housing remain the focus of this research.

Research Questions

1. What are the barriers to connecting people to affordable housing in Portland, Oregon?
2. What are common or persistent factors that lead to people losing their housing?
3. What traumas result from homelessness, and how do they act as additional obstacles to finding housing and receiving services?

Methods

Research Population

There are two groups of populations that I interviewed:

- Group 1, people who are experiencing housing instability, are included in this study as they are both the group the research is aimed at helping, and they provide unique perspectives on the limitations of the housing assistance programs which would be impossible to obtain from anywhere else.
- Group 2 includes people who are in charge of or working at housing assistance programs, as well as professionals working in the design and policy fields who construct or otherwise affect affordable housing. They are necessary to include in the study as they have a major effect on the success of programs to find people affordable housing and have a great deal of power over those searching for it. They are often in charge of the ways in which affordable housing is implemented and built, they interact with many of the other factors that limit the construction of affordable housing, and make design decisions that affect the success of projects.

Significantly, there are other groups that I did not interview:

Children / Minors: Through the course of this research, I interviewed several people with families. Housing affordability uniquely affects families and the development of younger people. The effects of housing instability are also felt harder by people who must care for dependents, especially if they themselves might have trouble finding a job. Though none of the participants' children were present at the time of the interview, I still took care when asking questions about them, and reporting on their stories. When discussing the lives of the children, I always used

pseudonyms, and never included identifiable information when referring to them without exception.

The inclusion criteria for participants was broad, with two exceptions: Only people over the age of 18 were interviewed, to protect the privacy of minors. The participants also must have had at least some fluency in English, as that is the only language I speak fluently.

Recruitment Methods

Group 1: People living with housing instability, including those experiencing homelessness and those interacting with housing assistance programs.

I contacted organizations such as Street Roots and Our Just Future and provided them with informational flyers detailing the study²¹. As some participants did not have the means to contact me, I enlisted the services of the organization's staff in very limited roles. They were not able to solicit the participation of anyone, nor explain the study to any potential participants. Rather, their role was solely as a messenger and distributor of study materials provided by myself during times when I was not on location.

With the organization's consent, I placed flyer around their space showing the proposal of the study, time commitment, and compensation alongside my contact information. At the bottom of the flyer were a list of times I planned to be at the location of the organization to conduct interviews, as well as a note that directed potential participants to contact me if they wished to conduct the interview at an alternative time or place. The flyer also indicated that if they did not have a cell phone, email, or other way to contact me directly then they could have members of the organization pass along a message such as a time and place the participant would

²¹ Appendix 3

like to do an interview. The organization also had copies of the consent form available for prospective participants to view, however the organization could not explain or answer questions regarding the consent form. The act of consenting was always made at the time and place of the interview itself. There were no follow-up interviews with this group.

Although the total number of participants interviewed in group 1 was relatively small, I attempted to select participants that covered a range of races, genders, and other characteristics.

Group 2: Professionals working in fields relating to affordable housing and housing assistance.

I contacted members of group 2 via emails and phone numbers I obtained through my advisor, the recommendations of other people I have interviewed, and their firms or organizations. Follow-ups occurred with some members of this group, primarily through email.

Compensation / Reimbursement

Because the study consisted entirely of interviews, there was no material or monetary cost for the participants in this study. However, it is important to recognize that the time taken to complete the interview, as well as any time necessary to travel to the place of the interview, is of significant value to the interviewees, and especially to the members of group 1.

Participants in group 1 were compensated for their time with a \$15 gift card to the nearest supermarket, primarily Fred Meyers or Safeway. Most ready-to-eat hot meals that can be purchased at grocery stores cost at least \$10. Since many participants in group 1 did not have access to a kitchen in which to cook, this was an amount of money that could be easily and reliably turned into food. To not unduly influence participants, the description of compensation was not emphasized, and appeared in the same size and color font as the rest of the study information. Each interview lasted approximately 20-30 minutes. However, the interviewee

received compensation regardless of the length of the interview, or even whether it was completed.

There was no compensation for group 2. Participants in group 2 were likely to be in much more stable living and employment conditions than the members of group 1, and the time commitment and potential risk of recounting painful memories were much less. Furthermore, the assumption is that the value of a warm meal is worth much less to members of group 2 than to group 1.

Interviews

For this study, I partnered with organizations such as Street Roots, Home Forward, Bud Clark Commons, and Our Just Future to best connect to people in search of affordable housing. I was the sole interviewer and used a series of interview questions specialized for this study. The length of the interview was determined by the willingness of the participants; however, the target length was between 20-30 minutes per person. The groups of people I interviewed, and the organizations through which I contacted them, are described below:

Group 1: People living with housing instability, including those experiencing homelessness and those interacting with housing assistance programs:

- Street Roots
- Bud Clark Commons
- Blanchet House
- Our Just Future

The interview began with a survey “Group 1 Questionnaire”²² with a set of baseline questions, as well as a risk disclosure and consent form²³. I had the expectation that most of the people interviewed would want to remain anonymous, however, if they wished to go on the record they

²² Appendix 2

²³ Appendix 1

were welcome to. Only one participant from group 1 wished to go on the record. After this set portion of the interview, the interview switched to open-ended questions with the expectation that the conversation would go in new directions and open up new topics and points of interest. Because each person interviewed had unique experiences and topics they wished to talk about, there were different questions asked of each person. However, what follows are the questions that served as a jumping off point for most participants in this group, categorized by topic:

On Services

What is a public amenity that would dramatically improve your life? Is there one already?

What is a service that would be valuable to those you perceive to be worse off than you?

What are the most common resources or support networks that you use?

How hard is it to access these resources?

Have you heard of Portland Street Response, or interacted with them?

Are there any services / help / assistance that are misguided or unhelpful?

How often do you use public transportation? What are your experiences with it?

Have you spent nights in a shelter before? Which ones? What was your experience? Would you do it again?

What groups do you find helpful? Unhelpful? Harmful? (Police, Government, PSR, Community Groups)

On Mental Health

Describe the stress you have felt around being homeless.

How have you noticed that stress impacts your mental health?

What is your sleep schedule? Do you get a consistent full night's sleep?

What are some of the things that prevent you from sleeping?

What are the things that give you anxiety or fear?

On Community

What does your typical day look like?

Do you have a social support network?

How do you feel living with other people who are dealing with mental health or drugs?
What is your community?

On Daily Life

How often do you experience violence while living on the streets?

How long have you been homeless?

What is an item, tool, or resource that you use every day or is invaluable to you?

Where in Portland do you spend the most time? Do you usually stay in the same area or move around?

Group 2: Providers & Designers of Transitional & Supportive Housing & Services:

- Bud Clark Commons
- Blanchet House
- Path Home NW
- SERA Architects
- Lifeworks NW
- Blanchet House
- Portland Street Response
- HOLST Architecture
- Scott Edwards Architects
- Home Forward

The interviews started with a consent form²⁴. I also began the interview by asking the participants if they wanted to go on the record. Nearly all the participants consented to go on the record with their names and positions, which are included when quoted. Like the other interviews this set of discussions was designed to be open-ended, however many of the questions were developed as a response to what I learn whilst interviewing others. As I completed interviews with people either living with housing instability or interacting with many of the systems people in this group oversee, I began bringing up common topics voiced by the participants of group 1. These questions were always phrased as general topics and didn't

²⁴ Appendix 2

contain any specific anecdotes or identifying features in order to protect the anonymity of the people who they concerned.

Similarly to group 1, the interviews of group 2 were designed to go where they led, however below are some starter questions used:

What qualifications (or barriers) do you require to move people into housing? How competitive is it?

What is the average cost of an affordable unit in one of your buildings?

Do you ever have repeat clients?

What are the most common reasons clients give for needing to use your services?

Are there any specific design considerations or functions that houseless people value or request?

Are there common items that are requested by houseless people?

How does affordable design change depending on the area of Portland in which it is needed?

Do any of your buildings have services tied to or associated with them?

What service do you think is most lacking in the system?

How much of your resources do you direct towards preventative measures (such as rent assistance) vs reactionary measures (placing people in temporary or permanent supportive housing)?

What are the most common sticking points in building affordable housing?

What does your funding structure look like?

If you had to direct more funding into one part of your operation, what part would it be?

What government entities do you work with?

What do you see are the biggest struggles with connecting people to affordable housing?

What are the biggest limitations to building affordable housing?

How effective are shelters in your view, and what is your perspective on Right to Shelter laws?

Do you have data on what percentage of people placed in homes stay in permanent housing?

How would you define a “success” and what is your “success rate”?

“From your experience, are there any common misconceptions [people of the other groups] have, or is there anything you would like them to know?”

What is the number one thing that holds people back from receiving housing from you?

Both Groups:

There was no plan to conduct any follow-up interviews with any of the people in group 1 (people experiencing housing instability), both out of the increased difficulty of contacting them and out of respect for their limited time and difficult situation. However, I did conduct follow-ups via email with the professionals of group 2.

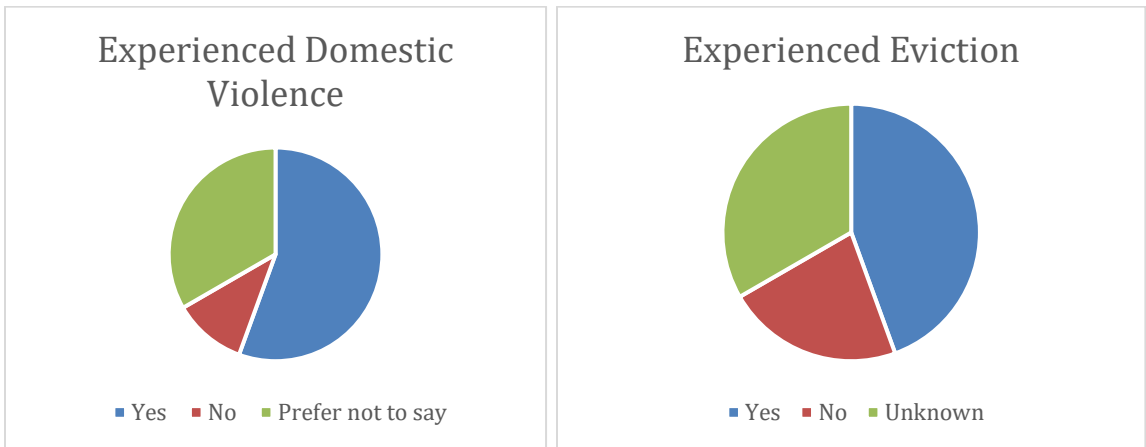
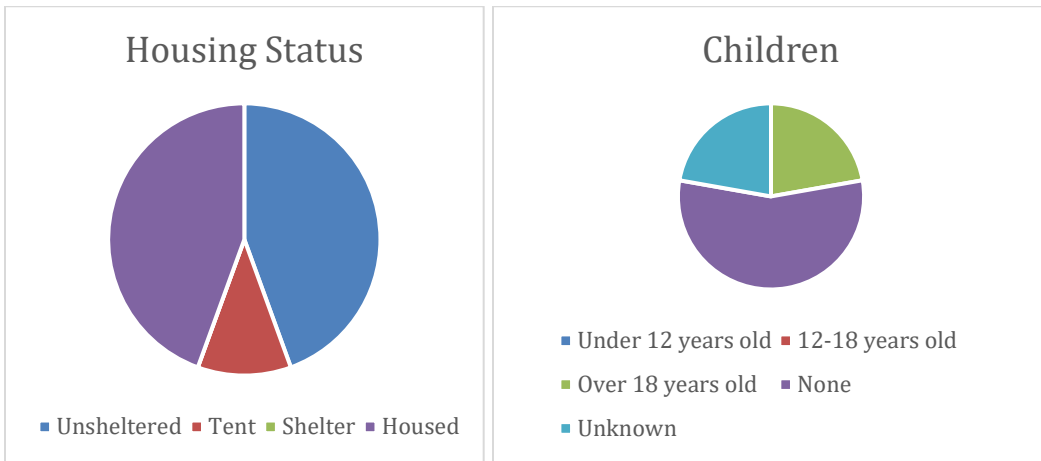
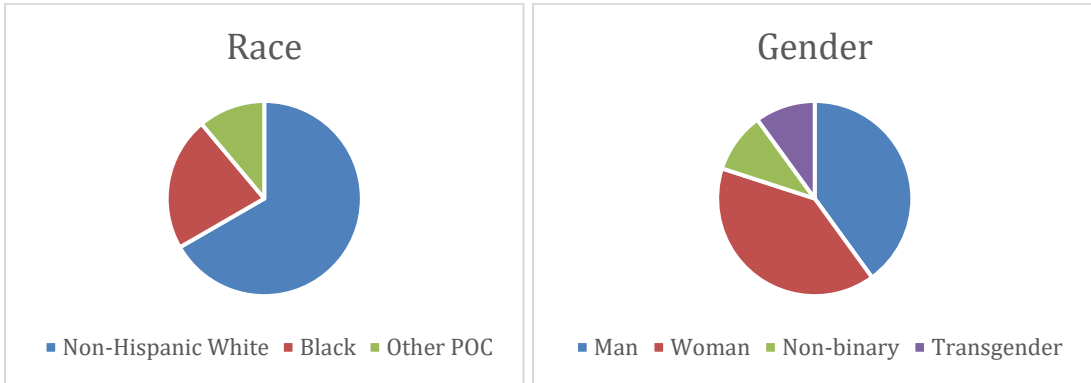
For all interviews, hand-written notes were taken, and a survey was filled out by the participant by hand. For consenting participants, I also recorded the audio of the interview purely for note-taking purposes. None of the audio recordings themselves will be played as part of the presentation of the research, nor made public or shared with anyone.

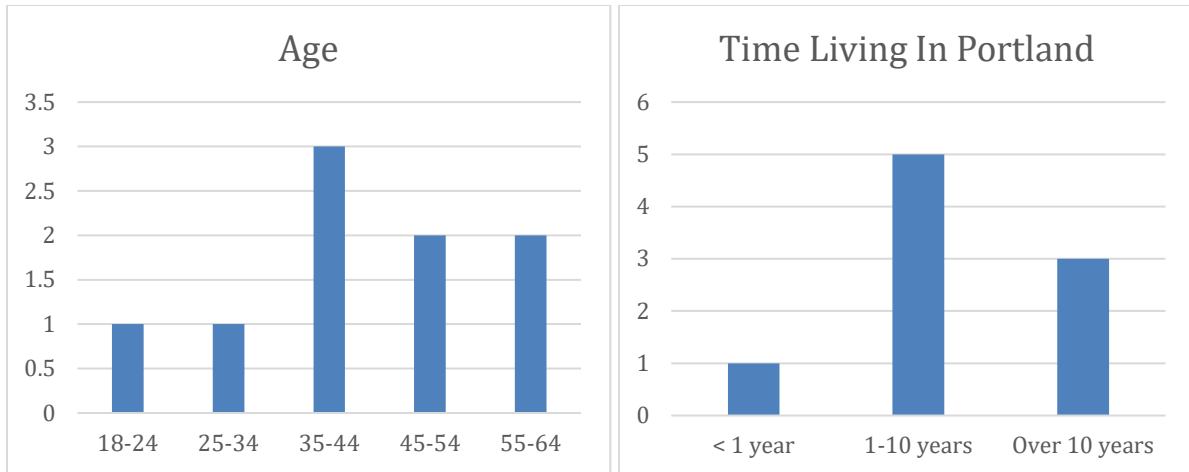
The interviews were conducted in places determined by the participants. For the professionals in group 2, this was primarily virtual, but occasionally at their place of work. The participants in group 1 were originally made aware of the study by the organizations who provided housing or services to them, but contacted by myself. The location of the interview was chosen by the participants, with the most common locations being in a nearby café or on the street.

The data gathered from the interviews fell into two categories: The surveys presented at the beginning will be analyzed quantitatively, and the analysis aims to reveal underlying patterns between participant's characteristics and their situation as described further along in the interview. The open-ended interviewee-directed section of the interview that follows the survey will be analyzed qualitatively: I looked for shared anecdotes and opinions across each group, and a large part of my analysis was analyzing the overlap of opinions and perspectives of one group are to the others.

The quantitative data from the surveys is reported completely anonymously. The qualitative data from the rest of the interview was presented as anonymously as possible, and the participants of group 1 are described with pseudonyms. For consenting participants that named or gave identifiable information on other people in their anecdotes who did not consent to be identified, I used pseudonyms for the non-consenting characters in the anecdote.

Survey Results





Precipitating factors that contributed to homelessness:

Several individuals discussed how they lost their housing. Some of the simplified stories below resulted in homelessness, while others contributed to housing insecurity.

I started using Meth hard after my mother's death. I didn't know that it affected me so much. I was going to Hill College at the time. I had just gotten two weeks backpay, and I just started buying 8 balls of coke.²⁵

- Became homeless shortly after leaving school.
- Got evicted after police raided their apartment.
- Moved to Portland and was unable to find housing.
- Lost subsidized housing due to COVID.
- Lost Section 8 Housing due to a drug-related conviction.

²⁵ Formerly Houseless Individual. Interviewed by author 2023.

Discussion – Chapter 1: Precipitating Factors

Homelessness is present in a myriad of different forms. Some have the resources to sleep in a car or van, while others are able to find shelter on the couches of friends and family. For those who are temporarily homeless, they may still maintain the jobs they had previous to losing their home. Others may have few resources or connections to draw on or have debilitating conditions that make finding a place to live more difficult. Struggles with mental health, substance abuse, and physical and mental disability all contribute to struggles to fit into the norms society wishes people to conform to. Homelessness in and of itself is a major disabling factor that prevents people from leaving it; Once homeless, it becomes harder to find a job, maintain a credit record, provide security deposits for apartments, or even do simple things such as accessing the internet, charging devices, or keeping up a good physical appearance. The stresses of living outside can exacerbate existing mental or physical illnesses or trigger new ones, creating a downward spiral; homelessness creates chronic conditions, which in turn leads to longer lasting homelessness. The longer a person experiences homelessness, the harder it is to escape it. Once a person loses the support structures that shelter provides, they become less able to fully support themselves, and require more assistance from services and other public amenities. Thus, the easiest and most efficient way to reduce homelessness is to prevent people from losing their homes in the first place.

In 2022, a Point In Time (PIT) count found that 5,228 people experienced homelessness in Multnomah County one night in January 2022. A year later, that count increased to 6,297. However, that count vastly underestimates the total number of people who experience homelessness in Portland each year. While the 2017 Point in Time count found 4,177 individuals meeting the HUD definition of homelessness, a study conducted by Portland State University

estimated that over 25,000 unique people experienced homelessness over the entire year²⁶.

Homelessness is a complex situation, and the ways people experience it vary widely. Some of the most common experiences are listed below:

- Doubled up in an apartment with family or friends.
- Living in a car or van.
- Living in a shelter, motel, or other temporary accommodation.
- Living in transitional housing or permanent supportive housing.
- Living in a tent, abandoned building, or other shelter not meant for permanent human habitation.
- Living unsheltered outside.

Additionally, there is a large but unquantifiable number of people living in dangerous situations or are financially dependent on toxic partners or family members but are unable to leave without becoming homeless. While the number of chronically homeless individuals is large, it is dwarfed by the total number of people who experience homelessness for just one part of the year in Multnomah County.

²⁶ “Tri-County Region Shares 2023 Point in Time Count | Washington County, OR”; “Governance, Costs, and Revenue Raising to Address and Prevent Homelessness in the Portland Tri-County Area.”

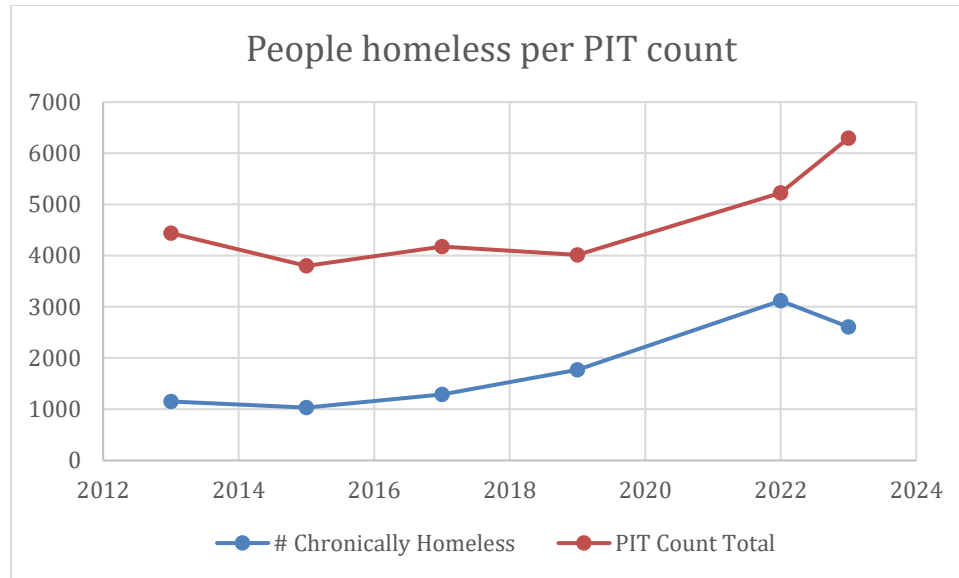


Figure 1: People experiencing chronic & total homelessness per Point In Time Counts

Homelessness prevention measures in Portland come in a variety of forms:

- Short-term housing assistance – Emergency rental assistance for households making less than 80% of the AMI if they are at risk of becoming homeless.
- Long-term rent assistance – Long term rental assistance primarily for those with disabilities and for those who were once chronically homeless and at risk of loosing their home²⁷.
- Permanent supportive housing services – Motels and other shelter options for families at risk of homelessness.

1.1 – Eviction

All homelessness begins with the loss of shelter, and one of the largest drivers is eviction. Both the formal process of eviction and the threat of being evicted can be incredibly harmful to tenants, and often result in homelessness. There were 6,557 eviction court cases filed in 2022, with the vast majority being for nonpayment of rent (83%)²⁸. It is important to note that these numbers only represent the portion of eviction notices that resulted in a court filing and do not

²⁷ “Supportive Housing Services.”

²⁸ Eviction Defense and Diversion Team, “Eviction Cases Filed 2022.”

include other formal eviction notices where the tenant agrees to move out. Eviction cases rarely go to trial. Typically, even the threat of eviction is enough to persuade a tenant to leave the unit. A formal eviction notice goes on a tenant's record for up to seven years and makes it substantially harder to find housing in the future.

Filing for eviction in court is primarily an enforcement method for landlords. In 2022, 23% of cases result in an automatic ruling against the tenant for failure to appear. Of cases where both parties were present, the vast majority (95%) ended in the tenant and landlord coming to an informal agreement and dismissing the case (52%), or the court enforcing a formal 'stipulated' agreement (43%)²⁹. Often, the agreement is for the tenant to move out of the building, sometimes being forced to pay back-rent or repairs for damages that occurred to the unit. One resident of Our Just Future had gotten charged for "move-out costs" when she had been evicted from a previous apartment, which she said was a common occurrence that is "not talked about enough". Among interviewees that had been evicted, many mentioned such costs. "I'd rather pay right now, man. Get in there and try and pay it back. Because I've seen it too many times. Missing that payment, getting that eviction. I had to pay my water bill, my electric bill, pay back my landlord for a stove that got taken because someone else squatted [in the unit]."³⁰ Though the tenant is rarely able to pay at the time of eviction, the landlord can attempt to collect at a later time, which can particularly impact individuals who might have just gotten back into housing and are extremely vulnerable.

Only 3% of eviction cases filed in 2022 resulted in a trial. Of those that do, the landlord is often at an advantage. While over half of all landlords had lawyers, less than 10% of tenants had

²⁹ Eviction Defense and Diversion Team.

³⁰ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by author January 2023.

representation³¹. Of the individuals who I interviewed, two had been formally evicted, one of which fought the eviction in court without legal representation and lost. The others had lost their homes by other means. Many are forced to leave their home for other reasons, often when the person in question is not an official tenant of the building. Sometimes people lose housing not through their own choice: Relationships end, and their roommate, whether that be a partner or a friend, kicks them out of the unit. Other times, it is voluntary. People who are homeless have much higher rates of being victims of domestic abuse, both while living on the street and before they became homeless. Per the 2022 PIT count, 51% of respondents who were women indicated that Domestic Violence was a reason they were homeless, along with 30% of men and 66% of transgender individuals³².

Tenants, especially those making substantially less than the amount of money needed to pay rent, are especially vulnerable to being taken advantage of by landlords and property managers. Legal defense is expensive, and often not an option for tenants being evicted for failure to pay rent. In part because of this, few tenants risk a trial, preferring to come to an agreement with the landlord instead. Of the 3% of eviction cases that did go to trial in 2022, the tenants won less than 17% of the time. One resident of Our Just Future, Laura, had received an eviction notice from her landlord after the police searched her apartment on suspicion of it being used by gangs. Though one suspected gang member had used her address for a form of identification, the police found nothing of importance at her place. She took her landlord to court, but did not have any representation, and was unable to access the sealed police records to document the report. She was evicted, and spent three months living in shelters and on the streets before moving in with her mother in law.

³¹ Eviction Defense and Diversion Team, "Eviction Cases Filed 2022."

³² Elliott and Oschwald, "2022 Point In Time Count."

While some lawyers take on clients pro-bono, they often will only dedicate the time if the case is an obvious one to win. This is generally the case not just for eviction representation, but other forms of representation as well. Maddy (name has been changed for anonymity) had been living with her husband and two children, when a divorce forced her to move out on her own. Though she was able to maintain a job, she had an immune system disorder that caused severe arthritis and made it difficult to do the manual labor required for most available jobs, as well as take care of her two young children. “It came to a point where I just had to say, I can’t do this anymore. Something’s gotta give somewhere, and I went and got [disability payment]. It took me two years to get because I kept falling through the cracks. Every time I sent my paperwork in I got denied.”³³ The only reason she was able to get approval for disability payments was because after over a year of trying, she finally got the number of a lawyer from a friend, who offered to take her case in exchange for 20% of her settlement. As the lawyer would only get his fee if they won at trial, they had only agreed to take the case as they believed it would be an easy win. Despite the long wait, the disability payments provided immediate relief. During the divorce, her husband had gotten custody of their children, and she was forced to pay him child support despite the fact that she hardly made enough money to cover her rent. However, as Oregon exempts mandatory payments of child support if the payer is on social security disability, she was both better able to afford her rent and cease paying child support.

After finding affordable housing through Our Just Future, her life began to turn around. Though she still spent over 30% of her income on rent, it was much more feasible. “I wasn’t in such a panic mode anymore, I wasn’t so stressed out.” Her immune condition, which tended to flare up when she got stressed, began to come under control, allowing her to work more

³³ Resident of Our Just Future supportive housing, interviewed by author April 2023.

comfortably even while coming off of the narcotics her doctor had prescribed her for the pain. Unexpected emergencies went from crises that would force her to lose her housing to events that, while stressful, became manageable.

1.2 – Property Management

Affordable and subsidized housing projects can often have complicated funding structures. They get part of their income from the residents themselves, while a portion comes from city, metro, state, and federal grants, dispersed by Home Forward, Portland’s housing agency. Many of the buildings themselves are owned by Home Forward, but nearly all large affordable or subsidized housing projects have a property management company that is hired to run and maintain them. The quality of the living experience is highly dependent on them. One resident of Our Just Future recounted the differences between the three management companies that had run her building over the years she had lived there. “A lot of times [the differences in management companies can be noticed in] the managers themselves. It can be the service workers we have that take care of the building, or the building management. Sometimes it can be whether or not you can actually get ahold of the property management company.”³⁴ Their current management company, Quantum, had been fairly responsive, however had suffered some staffing shortages in its management staff itself. When one of their buildings lost a manager, those from other buildings were forced to cover the duties of multiple communities, stretching even good managers thin. Unresponsive managers, however, can often be the least of a tenant’s problems. Wendy Sell, a case manager with LifeWorks NW, detailed some of the issues her clients had with maintenance and repair:

³⁴ Our Just Future resident, interviewed by author April 2023.

I've had two clients who had black mold for years (eventually having their renters insurance rehouse them), many with broken water heaters and appliances (and roof leaks), broken doors and stairs, etc., but there is little help without getting an attorney. (Even free attorneys have to have an extreme case to accept them due to the cost to the attorney and demand for a pro-bono attorney.) There are wonderful Tenants Rights action groups, but they are so backlogged that getting attention brought to a specific client's situation is difficult. For myself, even speaking to a property manager on behalf of the client (s) has been difficult. I know it's a whole other ball of wax, but getting responsible property management for low-income housing is definitely a barrier. Some renters feel they have no alternative than to suffer in silence once their maintenance request has been received/ignored.³⁵

These missed maintenance calls can have serious consequences. One of the Street Roots vendors mentioned having to move out of an affordable housing unit in the Alder apartment block because they had a fire, and the combination of the lingering smoke in the walls and presence of lead paint inflamed his asthma. Eventually, their renter's insurance had to rehouse them, however the low-quality apartments they left are still on the market, some rented to people in even more desperate conditions, while others sit empty. Forcing the property management company to comply with regulations can be challenging, especially when the building is privately owned or if the property management company is from out of town.

Milepost 5 is a converted Baptist nursing home turned affordable housing project focused on artists. It was built in 2010 but was sold to a California-based investment company called Community Development Partners in 2018. Though they had a contract with the state to preserve the property as affordable housing for 30 years, they began to try and market the building solely to renters on government subsidies and push out those who were paying market rate. The management companies that they hired let maintenance requests go unanswered, including vital ones such as broken windows, and security risks like doors unable to lock³⁶. Yet, despite being funded by the Oregon Housing agency, there has been little pressure to provide proper upkeep of

³⁵ Wendy Sell, email message to author, 5 February 2023.

³⁶ "Portland Leaders Celebrated Milepost 5. Now It's a Lesson in How Not to Do Affordable Housing."

the building. The property management company itself has dismissed all claims. After years of neglect and many lost residents, the remaining renters are filing a class action lawsuit against the management company. However, lawsuits can be slow going, and management problems in affordable housing, where tenants are easily exploitable, are common.

Working in good faith is essential when managing affordable housing units, however, even for dedicated property managers there are many challenges to running low-income housing. After one of the property managers for Our Just Future quit, their one remaining property manager had to work additional hours to cover multiple buildings. The property management company, unable to hire other managers, repeatedly denied her requests for vacation, until eventually she quit. As of April when the last interview with Our Just Future residents occurred, the building had no manager at all³⁷.

The lack of resources given to maintaining the building can lead to major issues going unaddressed even if there is motivation to fix them. In newer buildings, architecture firms have trended towards putting high tech environmental systems such as heat exchangers and water recapture systems in the building, with a dual goal of equity and long-term cost savings³⁸. Yet, they can only pass on those savings if they are functional. Building maintenance workers, who are often underpaid or inexperienced, are often unfamiliar with newer and specialized pieces of equipment. Those that are trained are often lured away by the promise of higher paying jobs in other buildings or by industry contractors:

I had great maintenance technicians, and I lost two of them because we paid for them to get their HVAC [certifications] and once they went through all the qualifications and stuff that they went over to the HVAC side because they were making substantially more money. But I was happy to make that trade because we

³⁷ Our Just Future Resident, interviewed by author April 2023.

³⁸ Scott Edwards Architects, interviewed by author February 2023.

wouldn't be as dependent on having a vendor come out and we could do more in-house.³⁹

Within public housing in Portland itself, it is even more difficult to conduct in-house maintenance, as union representation among Home Forward's maintenance technicians forbids them from working on most complicated or dangerous work, including electrical and HVAC. Waiting for a technician from the installer can be time consuming and expensive, if the company that makes the parts is even still in business. Bud Clark Commons is one of the clearest examples of this. Built to be an affordable housing project, it broke ground during the 2008 financial crisis. A last-minute design change cut the building to half of its original size, while dedicating the remainder of the lot to the Multnomah County Health Department. Many features of a larger building, such as dual sided elevators and slanted trash shuts were inefficient and out of proportion for the structure that was built. Meanwhile, existing high-tech systems began to fail, and the maintenance budget of the low-income building was not nearly enough to pay for their expensive repair. Though alternative, low-tech systems were relatively easy to install and maintain, the environmental benefits and cost savings of the sustainable systems were not fully realized, showing the importance of making sure environmentally sustainable systems are also resilient and economically feasible.

We were built to attain a lead platinum certification. Most of those fancy building systems began to break down and fail within the first four years of operation. So we've got lots of fancy systems that haven't really been maintained where you need to maintain a modern, mid, mid or high-rise property. ... One of the additional LEED features we had were solar panels on the roof. We have pressure vessels and the mechanical penthouse up on the roof as well. And that was designed to be a passive heating array for the domestic hot water. Those have all failed and the decision has just been made to leave those panels up because they're not going to go anywhere and until they start to meaningfully degrade, it's cheaper to keep them than it is to rent a crane and lift them off. I just replaced the big 199,000 BTU water heaters with a Rinnai tankless system. Just cut up the old pressure vessels. We can carry the on demand system up and just plumb it in

³⁹ Former building manager for an affordable housing nonprofit. Interviewed by author April 2023.

rather than deal with the crane. It just failed and it was just left there, along with the pressure vessels because it was cheaper to leave it. You see that more with unreinforced 100 year old masonry structures where they're like, 'we left the boilers because they're in the basement and we built the building on top of it', not [in a building] that's less than 15 years old.⁴⁰

1.3 – Case Management:

Among extremely low income and supportive housing projects, the types of residents served can also have a big impact on the ability to maintain the building. Bud Clark Commons, owned and run by Home Forward, is an extremely low barrier supportive housing project focused on those most vulnerable in the community. Its residents are primarily formerly houseless individuals who have chronic health conditions, including drug abuse and mental health disorders. Property damage to the building is common: In his first year, Eamon Beard, the building manager, had “five fires and seven large sprinkler deployments where total casualty loss was probably ... a bit over 60% of my operating budget”⁴¹. Bud Clark commons partners with many other supportive services, including Cascadia Health and the Multnomah County Behavioral Health Resource Center. Bud Clark only evicts residents for credible threats made against others in the building, or for excessive property damage. Yet even so, the rate of evictions is high. The transition from living on the streets to an apartment can be hard, especially for formally chronically homeless individuals. “The needs are very different for when you’re coming into a home from another one, and when you’re coming into one from houselessness. You need to re-learn how to cook, clean, [and] budget.”⁴² Over the course of his time at Bud Clark, Beard has had to evict people for continually flooding the building after using their sink to

⁴⁰ Eamon Beard, property manager at Bud Clark Commons. Interviewed by author April 2023.

⁴¹ Eamon Beard

⁴² Resident of Our Just Future, interviewed by author April 2023.

bathe, and for setting fires in the bathtubs. Many times, individuals have mental health issues and trauma from their time on the streets. A history of food insecurity can lead people to keep food long after it has gone bad and started to rot. “I’ve had to sort of make my peace with it. Even if a resident or anybody is doing something that is completely incomprehensible to me, generally speaking, that person is behaving in a manner that makes complete sense to them.”⁴³

It is essential then that case management does not stop once a formerly houseless individual finds housing. Yet, the resources that do exist are insufficient to cover the number of people in need. HUD provides Shelter + Care vouchers where clients receive an apartment if they agree to work with services such as LifeWorks NW. However, the number of vouchers is extremely limited, and vouchers almost always go to someone already in care at the service. “On occasion an adult outpatient client gets [the voucher], but we only have 59 spots and if they get the voucher and they decide they don’t want to be in services anymore, we still have to sponsor the voucher. We can’t end it, so sometimes people will go years on the voucher and we’ll never get to open up a slot for a new person.”⁴⁴ For residents of existing apartments, they often rely on mobile services such as Project Responds or Portland Street Response, yet each have their downsides. Portland Street Response is a relatively new program, very small and overwhelmed by the number of requests they receive. Often if there is an emergency in the building relating to mental health needs, they won’t be able to arrive until hours later. Project Responds has been around for well over a decade, and pairs case managers from Cascadia health with police officers.

That's great service. We still use them a lot, but even that's a little bit less effective than it used to be. Generally, the Cascadia folks are going to want police there, and police don't have the capacity to just have an officer sitting outside for

⁴³ Eamon Beard

⁴⁴ Wendy Sell, Case Worker at Lifeworks NW. Interviewed by author February 2023.

like 20 minutes waiting for somebody to show up. So you got to play air traffic controller just to get all the parties there at the same time, and then hope that the resident is still outside their unit or outside of the building and that you know where they are. If they're in the unit, generally the line we get from the Portland Police Bureau nowadays is, well, they're in the unit. What do you want us to do? Call the Cert team and go in with flash bangs?⁴⁵

When mental health services are able to arrive and work with a resident, it is often only in the short term. In the past, a larger capacity of mental health service workers and a lower demand meant that individuals placed on a mental health hold were placed under observation and care for at least a day or two. Recently, however, many of the individuals that I talked to mentioned that medical services attempted to get through clients as quickly as possible. Two homeless vendors mentioned being put out on the street only shortly after receiving treatment for gangrene in an injured leg that nearly had to be amputated. Case managers that come to Bud Clark commons or residents are equally as quick to move on to the next case. “If somebody was on a mental health hold, they were gone for at least a couple of days. Now it’s 90 minutes sometimes. [The resident will say] ‘I’m not a danger to myself. I’m not a danger to others. I’m not having suicidal ideation.’ And they’re like, ‘great! You’re cured.’ And then they’re back on the street.”⁴⁶

1.4 – Funding and Dispersal of Existing Funds:

Services for housed individuals can make a huge difference, both for residents recently leaving homelessness, as well as housed tenants at risk of eviction. Path Home NW focuses on homeless prevention among families, both by housing those who have been living on the streets and providing services to housing insecure families. Unfortunately, there is little governmental funding or structural systems to provide services to those already in housing.

We have a homeless prevention program that is 100% privately funded. The city and the county don’t really fund homeless prevention work. They say they do, but

⁴⁵ Eamon Beard, property manager at Bud Clark Commons. Interviewed by author April 2023.

⁴⁶ Eamon Beard

it's not really prevention work. It's short term rent assistance for people who are chronically [on the brink of becoming] homeless, that need some other kind of resource. [The government] don't have it, so they just continue to pay their rent with this short term rent assistance and we call it homeless prevention. But that's not how it should be used. In our homeless prevention program, we have people that are housed that are generally stably housed, and something happened, some big emergency. Someone breaks their arm and they have to go get an X-ray and they gotta pay for a cast. And now all of a sudden they have a \$2400 medical bill that they weren't expecting. Something like that happens, that family is at jeopardy of losing their housing because they have this bill. So we go in and we help with the financial emergency to help prevent that family from losing their housing in the first place. We keep them in that housing and the we do the same kind of retention case management that we do with all of our families to help make sure that they can keep that housing long-term.⁴⁷

Short term rental assistance, as provided by the government, can get a family through an emergency that might have otherwise resulted in an eviction. However, without some level of case management to move families and individuals towards a more stable and resilient financial situation, they will remain housing insecure. While several of the residents interviewed at Our Just Future had never ended up in a shelter or on the street, their housing insecurity manifested itself in other ways. “When [one resident and her husband] first got separated, it was probably the first five years we were moving every year, at least once a year until we ran into Human Solutions [now called Our Just Future].”⁴⁸ She had no knowledge that low income, subsidized housing existed, and being able to pay less turned her life around. Yet, she could have accessed the housing years earlier if she had someone to properly advocate for her. As a self-described housing advocate herself, she has assisted multiple friends with the housing process, though she admits that it is hard work:

I recently helped this young lady who lost her significant other, and she was going to lose her housing. She was going to be displaced, and I did not want that to happen. And she's disabled. She would have either ended up back at her parents. She's 57 years old, who wants to live with their parents at 57? But she does have some disabilities ... She is smart, she just doesn't have the ability sometimes to

⁴⁷ Brandi Tuck, Director of Path Home NW. Interviewed by author January 2023.

⁴⁸ Our Just Future resident, interviewed by author April 2023.

think things all the way through so I helped her get housing. ... For three or four months, I was her housing advocate. Finally, [a friend] gets a call and says ‘I’ve got a housing advocate!’ ... But I started it. I filled out the applications, I called 16 different apartments here in Portland. I got her on like 40 to 50 waiting lists, so I got the ball rolling. We need people like me to do stuff like that for other people, and I didn’t mind doing it for a friend, but I can understand how this kind of work can wear on somebody. ... These housing advocates are probably doing it for 10 or 20 people, and I can see it’s wearing on them and they’re not being paid adequately for it. That’s why there’s such an overturn.⁴⁹

The failure of the city to hire more housing advocates and generally provide more assistance is not purely financial. For the Fiscal Year of 2022, JOHS only spent about 70% of its \$52 million budget. Much of this disparity comes from a failure to contract organizations to implement their solutions. This disparity is even greater for some services than the topline numbers let on. While most individual program costs were far under their budget, spending on short-term housing assistance (sending checks to families who are unable to pay their rent) was nearly double its budget and accounted for over half of all funds the agency spent. Permanent supportive housing services, and funds for shelter and outreach had only spent 50% of their budget, while permanent supportive housing had merely spent 17%.⁵⁰

Part of this disparity comes from the type of services outlined in their budget. Pure financial aid, such as Housing Choice Vouchers or short term rental assistance is easy to disperse to those who need it. More personalized assistance, such as housing case managers, behavioral health services, and development of new subsidized housing projects, is much more complicated and often requires the hiring of hundreds of skilled employees. The gap between the amount of supportive assistance offered and the number of people who need it has widened in recent years: “The safety net is not what it used to be. The system is under an immense amount of strain and it’s a lot harder to [prevent eviction] now than it used to be. ... [in the past], we’d issue lease

⁴⁹ Our Just Future Resident & housing advocate, interviewed by author April 2023.

⁵⁰ “Multnomah County Supportive Housing Services Annual Report FFY 2022.”

enforcement, [and I would talk] with my resident services coordinator who then goes to the county and says, ‘this person needs X for eviction prevention’. And that’s not a thing anymore in Portland, and I can’t tell you why.”⁵¹ The result is long waitlists for services, often weighted to give those most vulnerable individuals priority. Most waitlists for services are full most of the year, only opening up for a few short weeks at a time. “I get announcements on my case management portal. And then like they had 33 [voucher] opportunities that ended December 14th. It was open for 3 weeks, and I was trying to get as many people as we could to [get on the waitlist].”⁵² A person’s position on a list is usually determined by a vulnerability assessment conducted by Portland’s Transition Projects (TPI). The length and priorities of a waitlist often mean that only the most vulnerable get help, while those who are in a slightly better situation get left behind until they themselves are vulnerable enough to qualify. Many people with just one disabling condition such as a mild bipolar disorder can have a hard time living unsupported and assisted, but rarely qualify. “One lady was in my office just sobbing. She said, ‘I don’t meet any of this criteria, and I can’t get help’. So she’s couch surfing. And if you’re couch surfing until you get housing that’s difficult too, because you don’t quite fit [what the assessment is looking for]. On the assessment, it’ll usually ask ‘where did you sleep last night, and how many times have you been in a shelter in the last three to six months?’”⁵³ Experiences such as this are one of the reasons that people sleeping doubled up (about half of the population experiencing housing displacement⁵⁴) are among those most at risk for losing all forms of shelter. Simultaneously, because they have access to at least some resources in the form of friends or family, they could

⁵¹ Eamon Beard, manager at Bud Clark Commons. Interviewed by author April 2023.

⁵² Wendy Sell, case manager at Lifeworks NW. Interviewed by author February 2023.

⁵³ Wendy Sell

⁵⁴ “Governance, Costs, and Revenue Raising to Address and Prevent Homelessness in the Portland Tri-County Area.”

quickly benefit from a rapid infusion of funds in the form of a voucher or other housing assistance.

The longer a person remains in a precarious housing situation, the greater their risk for becoming homeless. Those who spend an unsustainable amount of their income on housing (or those who have no income at all) are unable to cover the costs of unexpected emergencies. Health problems, becoming the victim of a crime, losing a job, or facing a rent increase can easily push most people facing housing insecurity into homelessness. When a person loses all access to shelter, those structural, economic, and societal barriers discussed in this chapter become amplified and new ones arise. For thousands of Portlanders, even if the barriers to receiving affordable housing discussed above were remedied, they would not have the resources to obtain them. The next chapter details many of the obstacles and traumas that are unique to those living unsheltered on the streets, and the strategies and considerations that can be taken to minimize the obstacles they face to receiving shelter and care.

Chapter 2: Falling Through the Cracks

Chronic homelessness has been the fastest growing category of homeless people in Portland and across the country. It is also the most visible form of homelessness, and is frequently the subject of news reports, political messaging, and community discussion. City-wide Point In Time (PIT) counts of homeless numbers use the HUD definition of chronic homelessness, categorized as a person who has a significant disabling condition and has been homeless for at least a year, either at a single time or totaling that in up to four periods in a three year span.

In Portland, 63% of homeless individuals count as Chronically Homeless per HUD standards, including over 70% of those unsheltered and a similar number of those in Emergency Shelters⁵⁵. However, these numbers can be misleading: PIT data tends to overrepresent chronically homeless individuals, while the HUD definition of chronic homelessness excludes many who persistently struggle with homelessness. Portland conducts its Point In Time counts bi-annually in January, so those who are homeless between counts are not represented. Chronically homeless people by definition have been without permanent shelter for at least a year and are therefore more likely to be counted. It is estimated that over 25,000 people in Multnomah County experience homelessness each year. Yet, because those who live in transitional housing do not meet the standard for chronic homelessness, many who have been houseless for a long time and are still without permanent housing are not included in that number. As of 2022, 72% of houseless Portlanders had been without stable housing for over a year.

⁵⁵ After accounting for redistribution of unreported

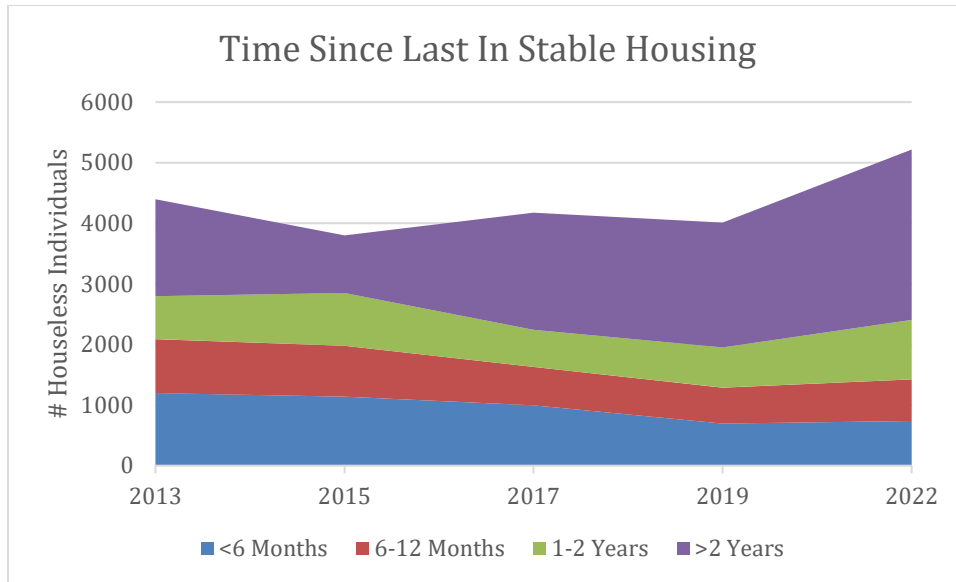


Figure 1: Length of time since individuals were in stable housing, by year. The share of chronically homeless individuals has been increasing over time.⁵⁶

There is a common sentiment among Portland residents that homeless individuals move to cities with more services and better weather⁵⁷. This belief is found not just in housed residents, but unhoused residents as well. Two of the houseless individuals I talked to mentioned that they had heard stories of people moving to Portland in search of services, however they appeared to place the blame on the lack of resources in other cities rather than Portland’s systems. “The [services] here are trying to do good, but then people hear about it and come, and then it all gets overwhelmed”⁵⁸. While there are some houseless individuals who travel to Portland specifically because of services, it is proportionately small in comparison to the number of homeless people overall. Over three quarters of houseless individuals surveyed in 2022 had been living in

⁵⁶ Elliott and Oschwald, “2022 Point In Time Count”; Conklin, “2019 Point In Time”; Krishnan and Elliott, “2017 Point In Time”; Smock, “2015 Point In Time”; Smock, “2013 Point In Time Count.”

⁵⁷ “Won’t Word Get Out That Portland Is a Shangri-La for Those Without a Home?”

⁵⁸ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by author February 2023

Portland over two years, with a majority of respondents having become homeless in Multnomah County.

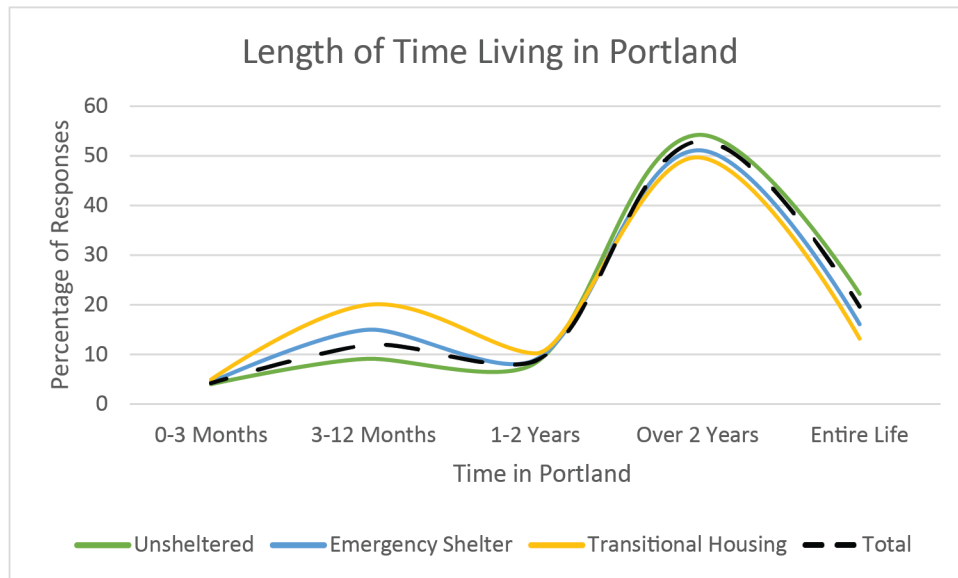


Figure 2: Length of time spent in Portland by housing type. Unsheltered individuals on average had been in the city the longest.⁵⁹

Of those that did come to Portland while homeless, clear majorities were living within the Metro area such as Beaverton, Clackamas, or Vancouver, or in an Oregon county outside of the metro area. While about 20% of those who came to Portland while homeless mentioned services as a reason to move, this is dwarfed by more common reasons such as the presence of friends or family or better job opportunities. Often, these moves are sponsored by other cities rather than homeless individuals themselves. Bussing is a common and cheap way for a city to reduce its homeless population, with the premise that they would go to stay with family or to a place with a lower cost of living⁶⁰. For a city or shelter to pay for the travel, a person must have a short term housing opportunity or support network in their place of destination; The vast majority of those

⁵⁹ Elliott and Oschwald, "2022 Point In Time Count."

⁶⁰ "Bussed Out."

sent on busses ended up at the homes of friends and family⁶¹, and like most large and expensive cities, Portland has spent large sums of money bussing homeless individuals to cheaper cities as well⁶².

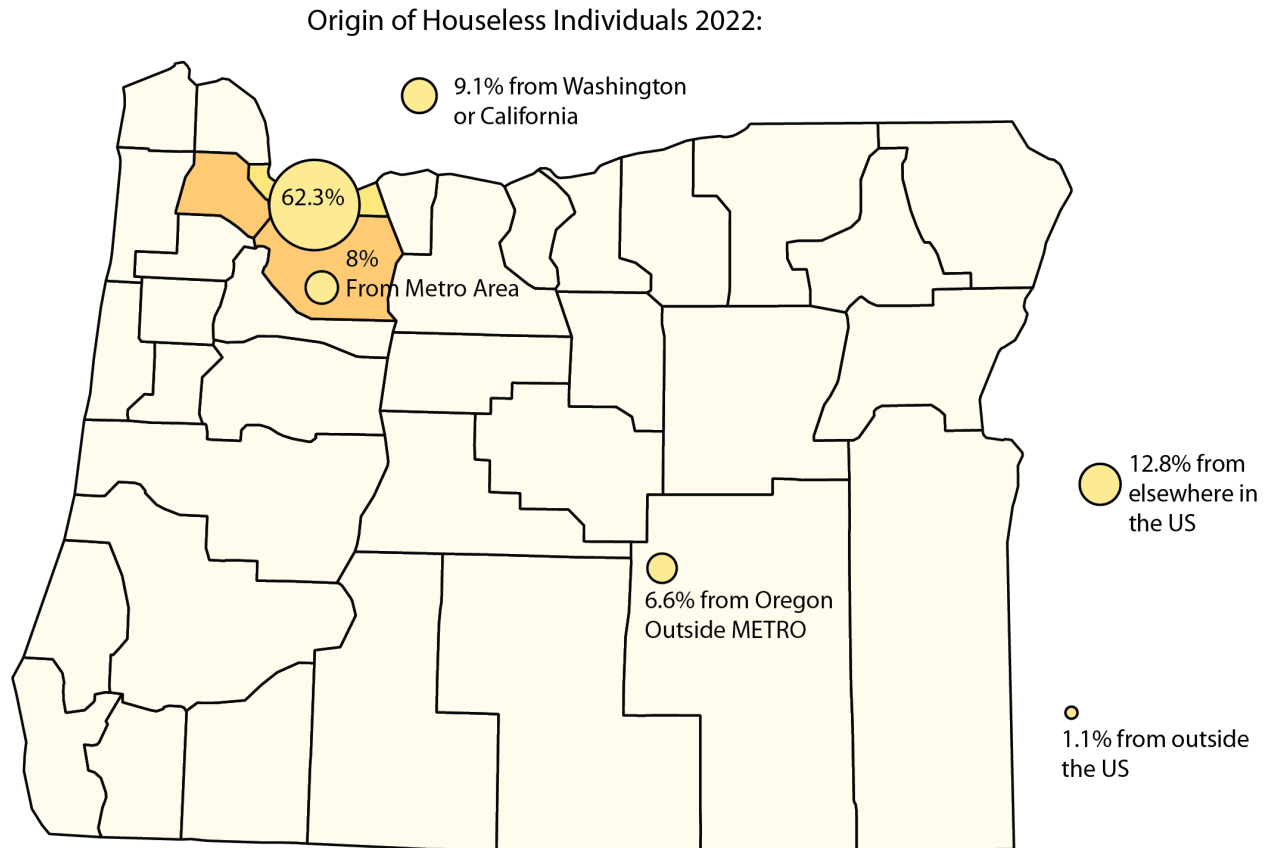


Figure 3: Place of origin of houseless individuals in 2022. Nearly two thirds of people reported being from Multnomah County, while less than 25% of people traveled from outside of Oregon⁶³

2.1 Employment

The dual struggle that many houseless individuals face is finding shelter and receiving an income, however the lack of one makes obtaining the other much more difficult. There are many

⁶¹ “Bussed Out.”

⁶² “Homeless Bused out of Portland, but Some Still on the Street.”

⁶³ Elliott and Oschwald, “2022 Point In Time Count.”

factors preventing people without homes from having an income, but their effects can be grouped into two categories: Those interfering with the hiring of the houseless, and those that make the responsibilities and stress of a job a challenge to handle. Most jobs require proof of address to be hired, and hiring processes often look at other factors such as criminal records and past employment. Unfortunately, the longer a person is houseless the further they become disconnected from the systems that sustain social and economic relations. Many individuals coming out of long periods of homelessness find that they do not have a credit score at all, as lenders only use the previous 6 years to arrive at one. Other essential items such as an identification card or driver's licenses can be lost or stolen, and the replacement costs are prohibitive.

You don't know how bad it is, being on the streets. "Get a job!" Well you try to get a job and no one wants to hire a homeless person. I've signed up for several jobs and usually I'm turned away because as soon as they hear 'homeless'. No street address? oh you don't have a street address, can't work. So then I'll fill out a street address, like, say, an old place. 'sorry you don't live here. Where do you live now?' I don't. – Street Roots Vendor

Many of the individuals interviewed said that they were not actively looking for work because they were not in a place where they could handle a job emotionally or physically. One Street Roots vendor was on probation with an upcoming court date, which was causing him a great deal of stress and anxiety regarding its outcome. Over the past months, he had applied to a number of jobs with no success, which was very discouraging. "The stress of a job is too tough. There's a few jobs out there that I might try to deal with, if I could get the job, but I've already applied for like seven different positions and haven't really got the job, so I'm just sticking with Street Roots until I go to court"⁶⁴. Jobs that are the most accessible to the houseless are those with low barriers to hire that are flexible with their hours and responsibilities.

⁶⁴ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by author February 2023

To make money, many houseless individuals use less official vocations that have become part of the public image of homelessness. Stereotypical images of people who are homeless show them with garbage bags full of cans and bottles, collected so they could be traded for quarters at bottle exchanges. This both contributes to a poor image of those living on the streets and can be dangerous: Digging through public trash in order to collect enough bottles risks being hurt by broken glass, needles, and other harmful substances they contain. Going into back or side yards to collect recycling can lead to angry confrontations. Panhandling is one of the most visible signs of homelessness yet is often not very effective: The average panhandler makes no more than twenty to sixty dollars a day⁶⁵. It can also be demoralizing, risk verbal or sometimes physical abuse⁶⁶, and be humiliating. In part because of this, many homeless are wary of panhandling for money. There is also an issue of pride: While walking home, I fell into a conversation with a young homeless person who had been unhoused since they were 19. Although they had no qualms telling me about many of the ways in which they made money (including some illicit ones), they were adamant that their money came from their own labor and that they rarely if ever asked others for money. “Taking that step back ... really helps a lot when you’re trying to get help. Build that courage to get that help, because it takes a lot of courage. That’s what I tell my friends too, when they are ‘being a man’, that cliché.”⁶⁷

2.2 Disability & Mental Health

Mental Illness and Disability are both causes and effects of homelessness, and especially contribute to the overall increase in chronic homelessness over time. Over 80% of unhoused individuals self-reported at least one disabling condition, with the most common being a mental

⁶⁵ Reinhard, “How Much Do They Make?”

⁶⁶ LANKENAU, “STRONGER THAN DIRT.”

⁶⁷ Street Roots Vendor, Interviewed by Author January 2023

health disorder (37%), substance use disorder (35%), physical disability or chronic health condition (22% each). A majority of housing insecure individuals interviewed for this study self-reported having mental health issues, disabilities, or neurodivergences. While many had existing disabilities prior to losing their home, homelessness exacerbated their conditions, and often created or revealed new ones. Untreated mental illnesses such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia can make interacting with society incredibly difficult, and can skew a person's view of reality. Frequent discrimination and harm from services meant to help can act as a catalyst to produce reports of conspiracies directed against the individuals or their groups. Several people that I talked to reported being stalked consistently and by specific vehicles. One pointed to individual cars that drove past, indicating that they were financed by groups of people who aimed to cause harm to them specifically. While many of the broader explanations for the apparatus that was targeting them ranged from the unlikely to the conspiratorial, their personal experiences that led them to these beliefs are much more believable. One trans woman was told by multiple shelters that she was unwelcome for a variety of reasons. One said she had received a ban for 'unwelcome sexual advances', despite the fact that she had never been to the shelter before. One long term housing assistance program claimed she had been evicted the prior year for fighting. According to the woman, she was able to fight the grievances against her, but the managers would come up with a different reason that she was unable to stay. "Finally, I just gave up. ... You don't realize this. They say, 'you're just not trying'. 'you don't want housing', or whatever. No, I want housing bad. It's almost impossible to get, and if you've got in a little trouble somewhere, just like f**k it, why even try? Already tried for years I've been trying. I even went into a place, and got kicked out for reasons that weren't even my own. It just happens

a lot.”⁶⁸ After constant struggles with the housing system, she came to the only conclusion that could explain the consistent discrimination she had faced; an organized group of anti-LGBTQ stalkers whose main purpose is to harass queer individuals. “They have gay stalkers in every building, and if they don’t and you’re trying to get into it, they put a gay stalker in there.”⁶⁹ In a separate conversation with a couple living on the street, one of them winced each time a car or truck would drive past. She had a high sensitivity to noise, which would cause her great pain. After an extended period of suffering when a train passing by was closely followed by a truck without a muffler, her partner remarked angrily that the drivers of the vehicles drive loudly on purpose because they know it causes her pain.

Another common reaction to constant rejection and discrimination is hopelessness and depression. During one of the first interviewing sessions near the Street Roots headquarters, one older man appeared especially interested in what I was doing. However, when he was asked if he wanted to take part in the study, it was not clear that he understood what he was being asked. After finding out that I did not work for Street Roots and was unable to give him a vendor badge, he initially thought I was offering services, of which he was very skeptical about. To him, it was not worth spending time filling out applications to waiting lists when he was “going to be at the bottom of a river soon.”⁷⁰ Suicide has taken between five and fifteen lives of homeless individuals each year since 2015, a rate of over 130 deaths per 100,000⁷¹. That is compared to Oregon’s suicide rate of 18 deaths per 100,000, which is one of the highest in the nation⁷².

⁶⁸ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by author February 2023

⁶⁹ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by author February 2023

⁷⁰ Homeless Individual, in conversation with author, January 2023.

⁷¹ Average of suicides of individuals from Domicile Unknown 2015-2021.

⁷² “Oregon Health Authority : Data and Analysis : Suicide Prevention : State of Oregon.”

The amount of instability that not having permanent shelter brings to the lives of houseless individuals has an outsized effect on their social lives as well. While the majority of people interviewed had partners, either present or mentioned, nearly all described a lack of a stable community, and the toll it took on them.

[Loneliness] is one of the hardest things out here. When you get down to brass tacks a lot of times you can't hardly trust anybody, and like the few friends you have or folks you've gotten to know can end up in circumstances where you're not seeing them for weeks or months at a time, and so it can get really lonely, especially when like seven out of 10 people will just walk right by you. ... It's the worst thing getting some sort of negative comment or look.⁷³

Coping with depression, alongside other mental and physical health conditions, leads many to find means of escape or to manage pain. Among the individuals interviewed, drug use in the past was common, though all had stopped for at least a few months at the time of the interview.

Depression and tragic personal events were leading causes for drug use among the people interviewed: One man began using meth after the death of his mother, while another began using shortly after he became homeless at 19. One former user blamed drug use for the rise in long term homelessness: "I think [the reason that many people stay homeless] is the high rate of depression. Some of them do become addicted. They find that bottle, and that bottle lowers their ambition, and then they start to become fiends of other drugs."⁷⁴

Over a third of homeless individuals in Multnomah County have a substance use disorder⁷⁵, and they are at a much higher risk of injury and death: Over half of all deaths of houseless individuals since 2015 have been drug or alcohol related.

⁷³ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by Author January 2023

⁷⁴ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by author January 2023

⁷⁵ Elliott and Oschwald, "2022 Point In Time Count."

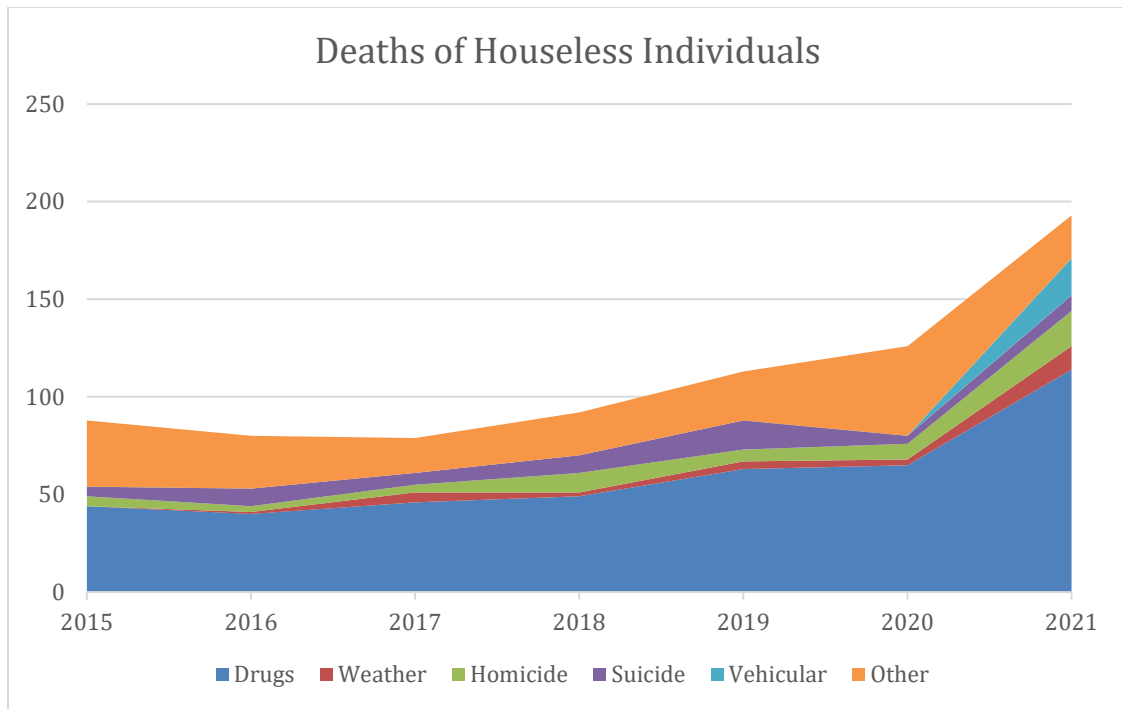


Figure 4: Deaths of houseless individuals in Multnomah County by type, 2015-2021. Most deaths were drug or alcohol related, either as a direct result of an overdose or as a contributing factor⁷⁶.

2.3 Shelters & Other Services

Mental health, disability, and the ways they intersect have a big impact on how homeless and housing insecure individuals interact with Portland’s systems and services. Many shelters are not equipped to provide shelter to people with mobility restrictions⁷⁷, and very few have the resources to adequately serve those struggling with mental health or drug abuse. Of the houseless individuals interviewed, all but one had spent at least one night in shelters, with mixed experiences depending on the shelter. None of the interviewees spent the majority of their nights in shelters, however three of them had consistently gone to them since they became homeless. All had a variety of negative experiences at the shelters, ranging from inconvenient to actively

⁷⁶ Walters, Evans, and Vines, “Domicile Unknown 2021”; Walters, Vines, and Lewis, “Domicile Unknown 2020”; Walters and Lewis, “Domicile Unknown 2019”; Walters and Lewis, “Domicile Unknown 2018”; Walters, Zlot, and Lewis, “Domicile Unknown 2017”; Walters, Zlot, and Lewis, “Domicile Unknown 2016”; Walters, Zlot, and Lewis, “Domicile Unknown 2015.”

⁷⁷ Asher, “Unhoused and Unaided.”

harmful. One of the individuals who used the shelter system consistently found them helpful, though often stressful. This however was the outlier. The remainder of the people I interviewed had extensively negative experiences at shelters, mostly to do with the management and other people staying at the shelter. The couple with the noise sensitivity often stayed in shelters when the weather became too cold, but attempted to avoid them when possible because of sensory overload and the trauma of a past assault. The most recent time they had gone to a warming shelter during the winter freeze, a fight had broken out and a fire alarm had gone off, scaring their service dog. Three of the people interviewed mentioned a lack of compassion at shelters and with other service providers. For some, this presented as a lack of understanding and a strict enforcement of standards: “They let different staff make up rules as they go and you’re kind of expected to know these rules that they make up on a dime, and then be held accountable”⁷⁸. For others, it was a lack of knowledge or an inability to refer people to other services, even when they were provided in the same building. Shelters in Portland can vary widely in their quality and services depending on the provider that runs them, and the area of the city in which they are located. Many shelters in East Portland and Gresham are open to the public most of the day, and provide wrap-around services such as showers and meals. Organizations such as Path Home NW pair their shelters with connections to other services they provide, including transitional and permanent supportive housing for families. Most of the interviews conducted with unhoused individuals occurred in or around Old Town, however, and the conversations therefore centered around shelters in that area. It is notable however, that three different residents specifically mentioned All Good NW as having notoriously poor quality services. “Granted, I don’t have a ton of experience because I’ve only been in a couple [of shelters], but I don’t see how one can be

⁷⁸ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by author January 2023

too much worse than that without being blatant”⁷⁹. The most common complaint was of belongings being lost or purposely thrown away:

Me and [my partner] got put out [of a shelter] because she didn't feel safe sleeping in the bed, because of the people she was next to. We left at different times, and they didn't tell either one of us that we had an appointment on Monday to talk to a caseworker to get our beds [reserved]. And it was really bad weather on Monday, so we ended up coming on Tuesday. They just said that three days had passed and apparently we missed this appointment that we were supposedly told about. And because of that, they gave away our beds and they threw away all our stuff and lost all our laundry. And that was the second time they threw away my stuff. And like, we were among the most agreeable people there. That's what really blew my mind about it ... She wasn't causing problems, and she's elderly and disabled, and you're just going to throw her out? And it was really cold the days following. It almost seems criminal, considering they're taking government money to do it. I call that fraud. – Street Roots Vendor

Other complaints, such as a general lack of compassion and stories of being mistreated or facing discrimination from shelter staff were common when talking about shelters in general. All but one respondent reported using shelters only as a last resort, when the weather was poor, or when they were in need of other services the shelters provided such as food and showers. The actual use rate of shelters was also pushed down among individuals in this group due to a lack of access. One individual reported that her and her partner were unable to travel to a shelter in particularly poor weather because she was in a wheelchair and had arthritis.

This trend of people with mental and physical disabilities being reluctant to visit shelters showed up in the broader data as well. During the 2022 Point In Time Count, the rate of individuals with at least one disabling condition was 72%, compared to 83% and 88% for those sleeping on the street or in transitional housing respectively. These rates are actually much closer than they were in previous years, when the difference hovered around 20%.

⁷⁹ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by author January 2023

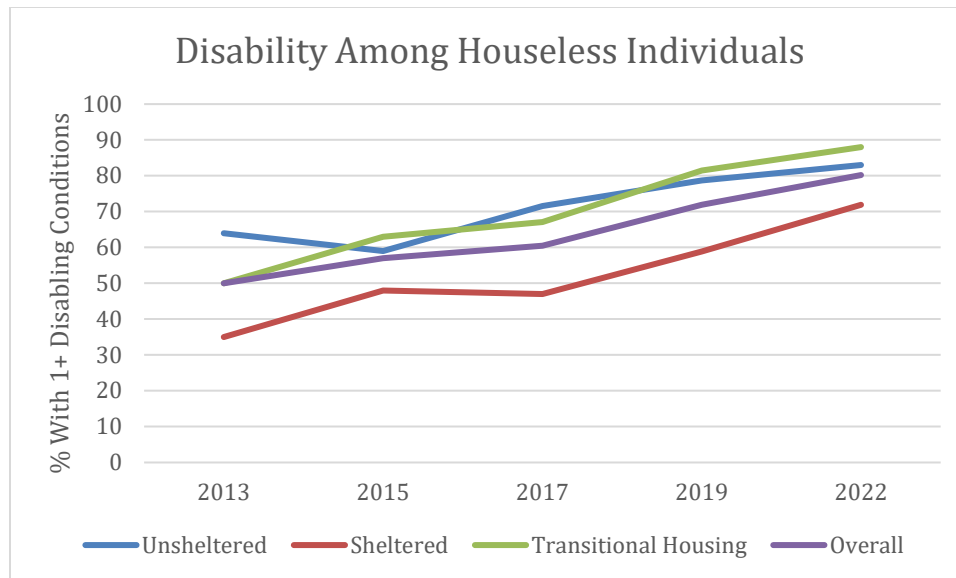


Figure 5: Rates of disabled individuals in shelters are consistently low⁸⁰

The disparity is even more pronounced for specific disabling conditions: While chronic health disorders and physical disabilities are nearly as common in shelters as the houseless population overall, those with mental health and substance abuse disorders are less than 60% as likely to be found in shelters than on the streets or in transitional housing. Many houseless individuals also report high levels of stress in shelters, especially for those with mental health disorders and substance use disorders. Those with disabilities often need special accommodations, including both physical modifications to shelters as well as additional help and understanding from their staff. The most common type of shelter beds are mattresses placed on the floor, or a cot, in a large open room. While space efficient and cheap, this setup offers little to no privacy, and brings individuals with contradicting needs in close proximity to each other. Furthermore, those who enter a shelter must surrender control over all substances, and often belongings to the managers of the shelter. They are dependent on the shelter for their basic resources, and amenities such as showers, food, and even access to the shelter itself are only available at

⁸⁰ Elliott and Oswald, “2022 Point In Time Count”; Conklin, “2019 Point In Time”; Krishnan and Elliott, “2017 Point In Time”; Smock, “2015 Point In Time”; Smock, “2013 Point In Time Count.”

specific designated times⁸¹. For neurotypical people and those in good physical and mental health, this might be a small tradeoff, however for many suffering from mental health issues or substance abuse, it can be a deal breaker. For many people living on the streets, “[they think] Screw it, I can live out here, I can make it out here. ... Some of them like it, they don’t have to answer to anybody.”⁸²

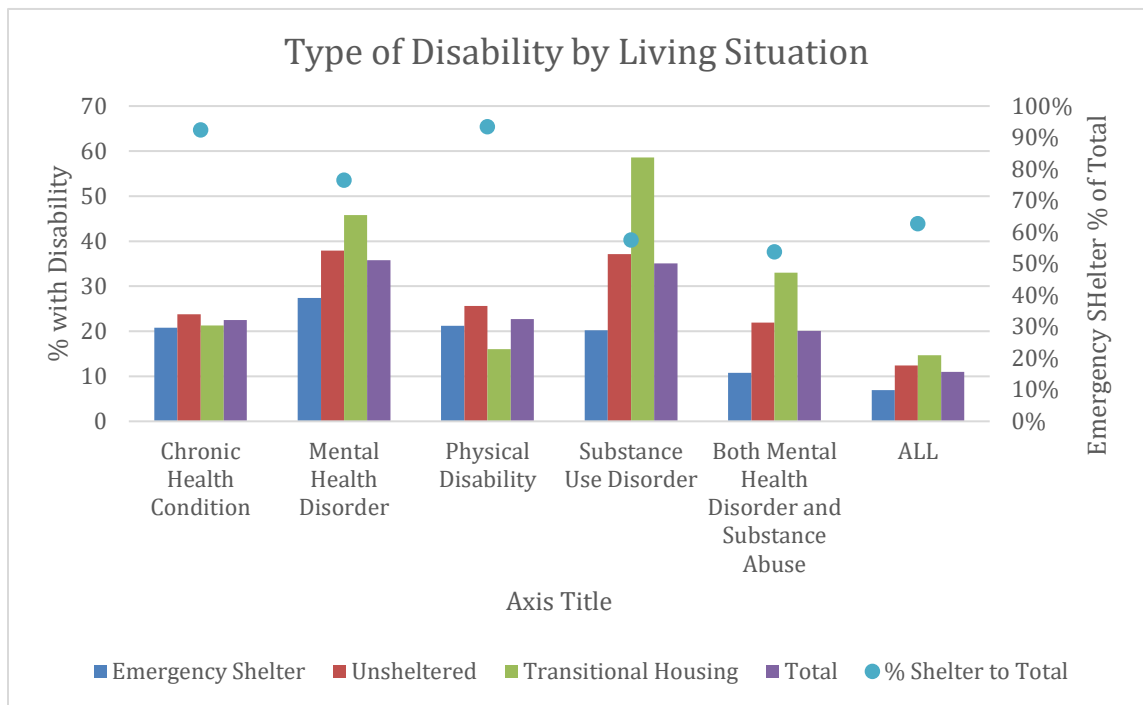


Figure 6: Comparison of the living situation of disabled houseless individuals by the four most common disabling conditions and their combinations.⁸³ The columns note the percentage of respondents with the condition, while the points represent how common the disability is in a shelter compared to the general houseless population.

Before 2015, most shelters in Portland had a high barrier to entry, requiring that the residents be clean and sober, and not have any pets, among other requirements. Since then, the city has opened or converted a large number of low barrier shelters.

⁸¹ Goodman, Fels, and Glenn, “No Safe Place: Sexual Assault in the Lives of Homeless Women.”

⁸² Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by the author January 2022.

⁸³ Elliott and Oswald, “2022 Point In Time Count.”

2.4 Violence

Living on the streets exposes people to much higher rates of violence than the general population. The types of violence experienced vary widely, and include both targeted attacks as well as crimes of convenience that are much more likely to affect houseless individuals. Two of the people I interviewed described having their tent or shelter burned down in the middle of the night, though neither had been there at the time. “My tent got burned down, luckily I wasn’t inside of it. There’s people that will do it just for the fun of it ... [throw] gas or whatever, light it on fire. Some people live, some die.”⁸⁴ While some of this violence is perpetrated by other houseless individuals, much of it is done by housed individuals. Those living on the street are more than twice as likely to be the victims of a violent attack, including homicides, than the perpetrator.⁸⁵ Much of the violence experienced by the people interviewed had taken place downtown, and in Old Town in particular. At least one individual had to move across the river due to not feeling safe, and made the daily trip downtown to access services and buy papers at Street Roots: “[The violence] definitely caused me to miss appointments and stuff like that. It’s gotten violent so bad that I sometimes don’t come down here, and like I want to come down here, but it’s like - it’s too violent. Sometimes even for things like [picking up Newspapers from Street Roots].”⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by author February 2023

⁸⁵ “Homeless Homicides Are On the Rise.”

⁸⁶ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by author February 2023

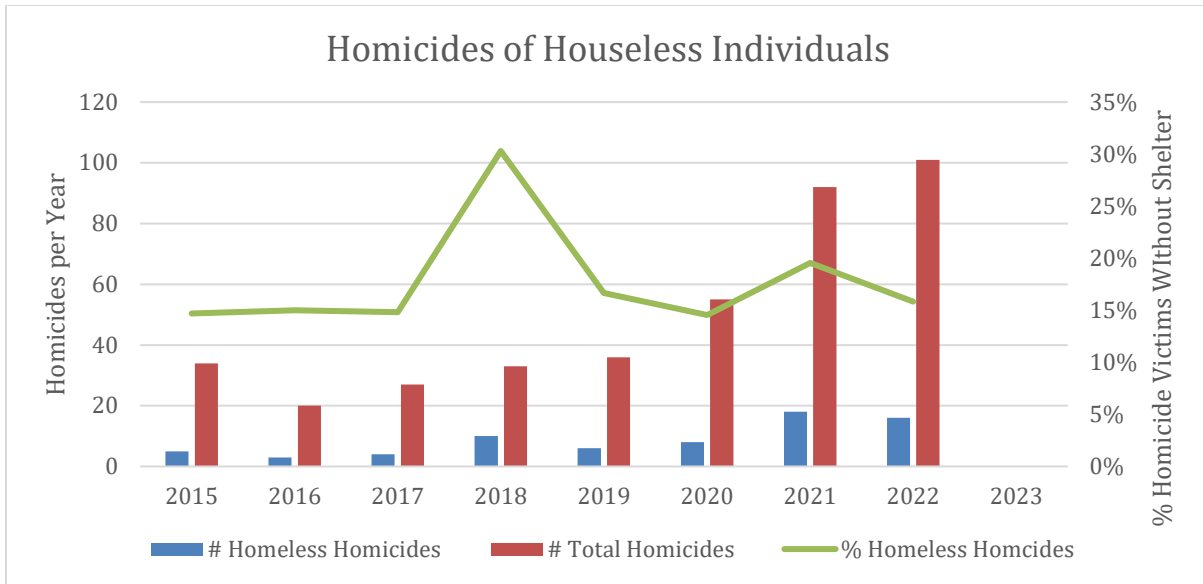


Figure 7: Homicides in Portland by year & housing status. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of homicides has increased both among houseless individuals and the public overall. While those that are homeless make up only about 1% of the population, they consistently account for over 15% of annual homicide victims⁸⁷.

While the violence faced by houseless individuals is often extreme, they rarely go to the police for help unless the situation is ongoing. Much of this stems from previous experiences with the police: One couple that I talked to were both autistic and had PTSD. One was bipolar, and the other had a speech impediment that made it difficult for her to be understood. Both of them had been arrested multiple times on a variety of charges, and had spent time in jail, both separately and together. One night in particular, they had a confrontation with officers. The woman had a medical emergency, and had difficulty standing up straight or understanding what was going on. Her leg got injured in the struggle, and her wheelchair was taken away and she was placed in a jail cell. She was charged with resisting arrest and assaulting officers. She described being called

⁸⁷ “Interactive Report Summarizing the Type and Number of Report Offenses by Neighborhood in the City of Portland.”; “Homeless Homicides - Google Drive”; Walters, Evans, and Vines, “Domicile Unknown 2021”; Walters, Vines, and Lewis, “Domicile Unknown 2020”; Walters and Lewis, “Domicile Unknown 2019”; Walters and Lewis, “Domicile Unknown 2018”; Walters, Zlot, and Lewis, “Domicile Unknown 2017”; Walters, Zlot, and Lewis, “Domicile Unknown 2016”; Walters, Zlot, and Lewis, “Domicile Unknown 2015.”

a Gypsy while in jail, insulted, and mistreated. While in jail, her leg became infected and gangrenous, to the point where it nearly required amputation. Her partner was able to take her to the hospital to get her leg taken care of, but she was quickly discharged to the street afterwards. Research shows that nearly half of all arrests in Portland are of homeless individuals.⁸⁸ Instead of relying on police and other traditional protective services, the individuals interviewed tended to develop their own strategies for staying safe at night: “I tend to have a good navigation system for detecting [violence] when it’s around and not getting caught up in it.”⁸⁹

Domestic violence and rape are also common forms of violence for those living on the street, especially among women. Transgender individuals had the highest rate of domestic violence rates of any group at over 60%, and 30% specifically mentioned domestic violence as a reason for experiencing homelessness⁹⁰. One transgender woman interviewed was purposely dressed in gender neutral clothing and talked quietly, trying not to draw attention to herself.

I’m dressed like a boy out here to stay safe because last time I was wearing girl’s clothes I had a gun to my head ... If you see any Trans on the street, it’s really hard to know if they’re Trans or not. Most times because they’ll be wearing boy clothes. ... Because all of us have had the same situation happen to us.⁹¹

Stability is essential to have for mental health, job stability, and various other aspects of life, and is something that most houseless individuals lack. One of the most frequent and harmful disruptors of stability are campsite sweeps, contracted out by the city to Rapid Response Bio Clean since early 2020⁹².

The only time it’s been too bad were the times I just wasn’t there, so my stuff was just gone. Usually if you’re somewhat agreeable with them they’re not too bad. If you’re not in a semi-permanent spot you already know that it’s only going to be a

⁸⁸ Lewis, “Police Know Arrests Won’t Fix Homelessness. They Keep Making Them Anyway.”

⁸⁹ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by author January 2023

⁹⁰ Elliott and Oswald, “2022 Point In Time Count.”

⁹¹ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by author February 2023

⁹² “Portland City Council Votes to Extend Contract with Rapid Response, Camp Cleanups to Resume.”

matter of two or three weeks if you're lucky before you have to go off anyways. So it's definitely a different kind of camping.⁹³

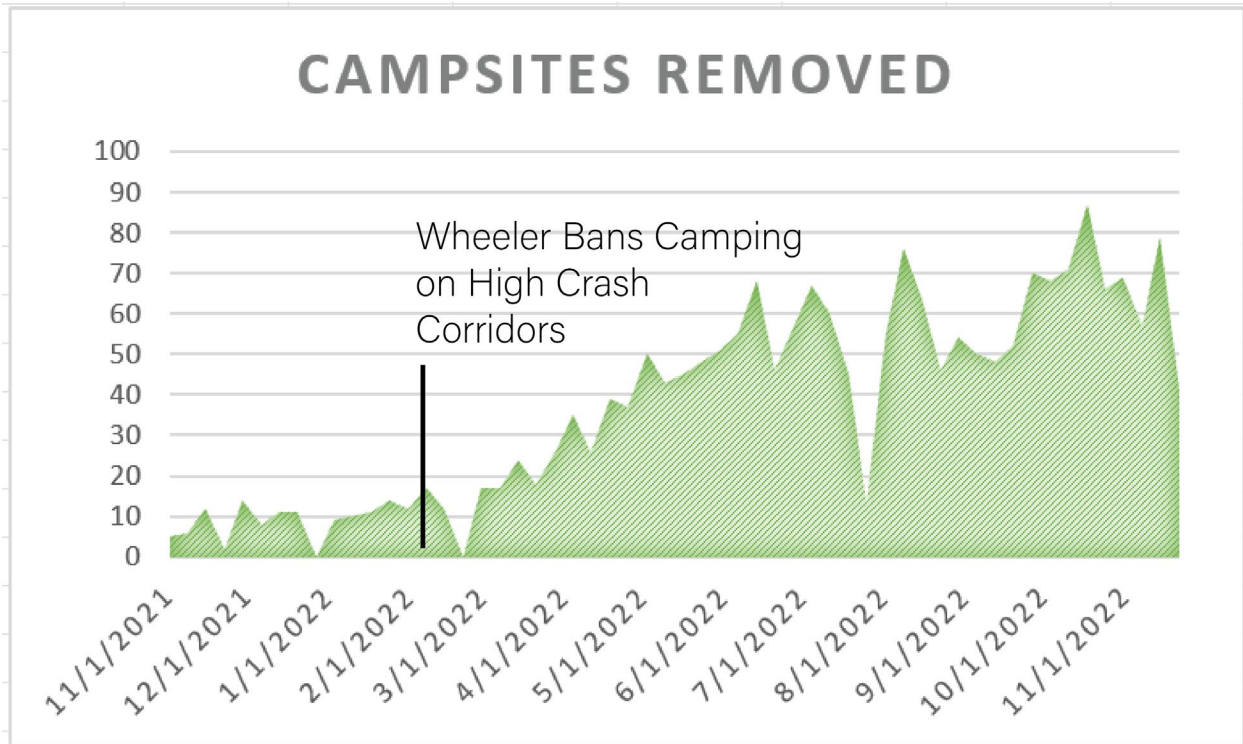


Figure 8: Campsites swept between Nov. 2021 and Nov. 2022. The dips in early March and August correlate with extreme weather events, during which times city policy bans forced removals. The line in February of 2022 indicates the date that Ted Wheeler, the mayor of Portland, placed a ban on camping on High Crash Corridors.

Every week between April 2022 and April 2023 there have been an average of 40 campsites swept, displacing the people who live there. The average number of people in a swept campsite is 8. Most often, the camp is re-established within a week. In 2021, 70% of pedestrians killed in Portland traffic accidents were homeless. In February of 2022, Portland's mayor forbade all camping on city designated high-crash corridors. This coincided with an increase in overall campsite removals, which had been down to an average of 10 per week during the COVID pandemic. Most campsites removed in 2022 were for reasons other than being located on a high

⁹³ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by author January 2023

crash corridor. However, most campsite removals in East Portland are along High Crash Corridors while most removals in the inner east side and west of the Willamette were for other citations. Official reasons for campsite removal include posing a health or safety hazard, suspicion of drug use and criminal activity, or if a campsite contains more than 8 individuals.

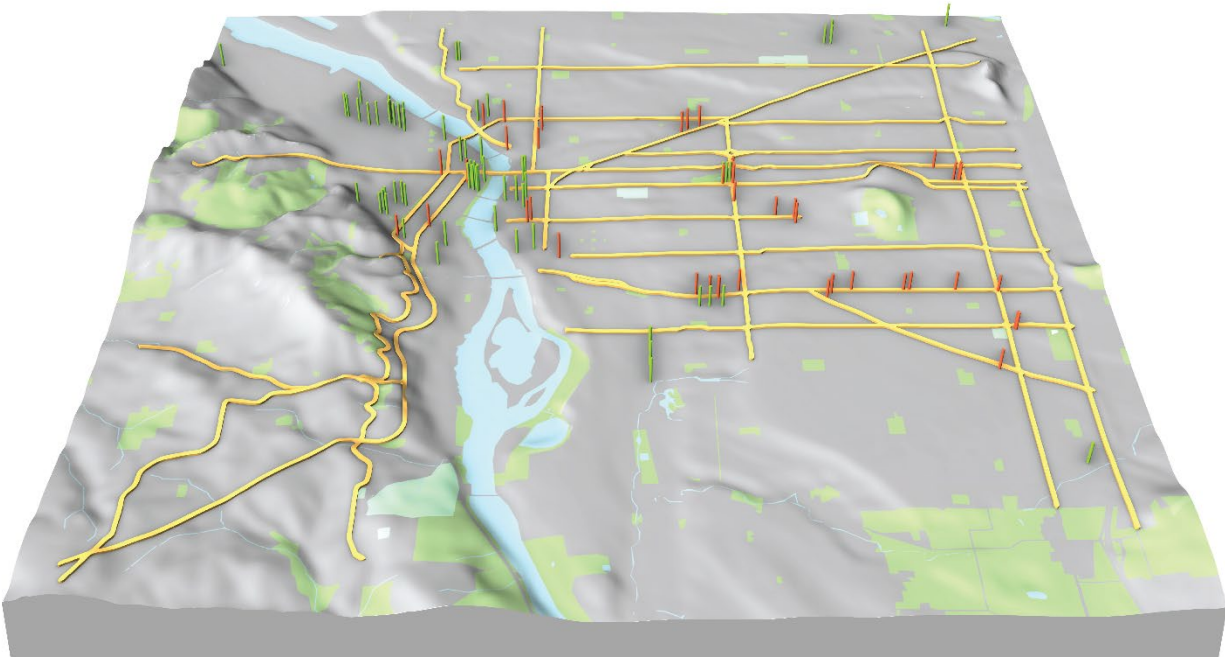


Figure 9: Campsite Sweeps in a three week period from October 24th through November 13th, 2022. The red markers are sweeps that occurred along high crash corridors, while green markers are of sweeps conducted in response to other complaints.⁹⁴

We're lucky enough to have a place - the property is owned by people in the process of renovating it or figuring out what they're going to do with it, and have been letting the respectable of us stay there and basically just as long as we don't go buck wild. One of the campers that we'd allowed to be on the spot with us had started having disagreeable behavior to have him around anymore, and so we asked them to find another place and they got disgruntled enough to come back and light what had been their little tent outside the property on fire. And we got right on top of it as soon as we noticed and actually got the fire out before the fire department arrived – Street Roots Vendor.

⁹⁴ "Reports | Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program | Portland.Gov."

2.5 Case Workers

Case workers are an essential part of the process of rehousing people permanently. The research shows that giving someone a home, as the Housing First philosophy advocates for, is an essential part of the housing process. However, it is not enough just by itself. Supportive Housing is needed. Of the housing insecure folks who I talked to, those that were either currently housed or had a plan to be housed all had a caseworker that they were in contact with. When asked how they had gotten the section 8 voucher, the Street Roots vendor replied “Well me, I’ve had help. I’ve been there now for over five months ... I’ve had a caseworker. A person who advocates for you. Someone to help you, kind of like a big brother, a mentor. ... I was in a program [that] gave you a counselor and a caseworker that helps guide you into getting housing.”⁹⁵ Part of the reason that caseworkers are so essential is the complexity of housing assistance programs and other financial aid: There are dozens of different organizations in Portland that provide homes, each with their own requirements, applications, and waitlists. Federal assistance, primarily in the form of Housing Choice Vouchers (commonly known as Section 8 Housing) has even longer wait times and is severely underfunded. For some housing opportunities such as emergency shelters, a referral from a caseworker is necessary to apply. Yet, even for rental assistance that does not require a reference, having an experienced person to assist makes a marked difference. In Seattle, a program called “Creating Moves To Opportunity” commissioned a study to quantify the extent to which caseworkers make a difference to where Section 8 Voucher recipients moved. The study itself was focused on “High Opportunity Neighborhoods”, quantified by how likely a child raised in the neighborhood would go on to have a high paying job. The participants in the study were divided into four groups: A control

⁹⁵ Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by Author January 2023

group that received only the housing voucher, a “light intervention” group that received information about “high opportunity neighborhoods”, a “medium intervention” group that got limited support from the program’s Navigators such as a 1 on 1 meeting and application help. The “high intervention” group got the full support of the navigators including the following:

- Tailored experience by meeting with families one on one.
- Talking to landlords to reassure them about tenants
- Giving tenants scripts and coaching about how best to interact with landlords
- Giving tenants screenings to become aware of deficiencies (low credit scores, ect) and ways to explain them to potential landlords (as part of a broader process to make their applications stronger)
- Providing insurance funds for damages caused by tenants (up to 2000 dollars), though they were rarely used (2 out of 178 units during the experiment)
- Financial support for moving, security deposits, application fees, and other needs.

The results were striking: The more funding and assistance that the voucher recipients were given, the more likely they were to move into the high opportunity neighborhood. While only 12% of voucher recipients naturally moved into the neighborhoods, over half of the recipients with full navigator support ended up moving. Furthermore, while only 65.8% of the control group leased a unit (either inside or outside of a high opportunity neighborhood), between 80-90% of people who got some measure of help got into a unit. Also, those who did move into a higher opportunity neighborhood were more likely to remain in their apartment in the following years. However, in the first arm of the experiment, the fraction of people who got a lease before the voucher expired was virtually the same (around 87%).

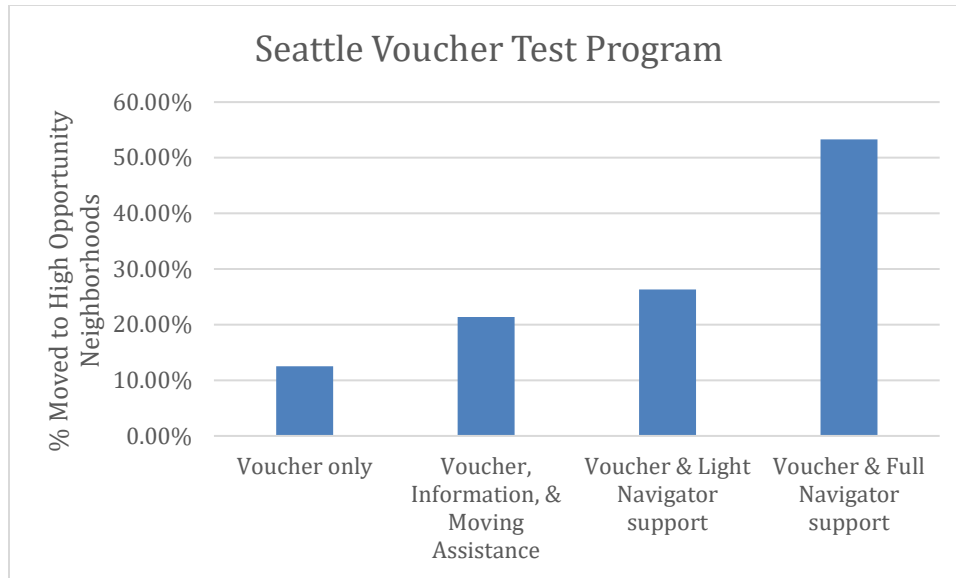


Figure 9: Percentage of Section 8 Voucher recipients who moved to a high opportunity neighborhood by amount of personal support given⁹⁶.

There are some important notes to be made about this study, especially as they pertain to homelessness: Firstly, 13% of households were homeless at the beginning of the study, though the study does not mention how the previous situation of the people affected how they got into housing. And while the study mentions that 65.8% leased a unit with the Housing Choice voucher in the control group, they do not provide information about what portion of the population were able to take advantage of the Housing Choice Voucher system. In 2000, HUD conducted a study to determine the success rates for the Voucher program. Overall, only 69% of vouchers were used before their expiration date in metropolitan areas, though the rates varied widely by housing agency. Typically, Housing Agencies use nearly all of the funds that they are given⁹⁷. However, the six-month window given to lease an apartment, in combination with the relatively low success rates for the voucher programs means that at any given time a significant portion of vouchers are not in use. In the Portland metropolitan area, 17% of vouchers have yet

⁹⁶ Bergman et al., “Creating Moves to Opportunity: Experimental Evidence on Barriers to Neighborhood Choice.”

⁹⁷ Finkel and Buron, “Study on Section 8 Voucher Success Rates.”

to be applied to a given apartment⁹⁸. Much of the reason for this lies in the extremely tight housing market - while Housing Choice Vouchers are guaranteed to cover the average rent for an area, they do not cover other expenses such as application fees, moving fees, and most importantly security deposits, which are typically equal to a month's rent. In a tight market, landlords have their pick of tenants, and prefer those with good credit and no evictions or houselessness in their past. Many are wary that even if tenants can cover the security deposit, they might cause additional damage beyond what the deposit covers. Others are turned off by the inspection that the Housing Choice Voucher program requires a unit to go through before it is approved⁹⁹. All this combines to produce a situation where not all groups of people are equally as likely to be able to use the voucher once they receive it. Among those who receive vouchers, those who had a preference on the waitlist due to being homeless had a 60% success rate, compared to the 69% success rate for households overall. The elderly, disabled, and those with large families are also less likely to be able to use a voucher if they receive one¹⁰⁰. If they fail to pick up their voucher or don't use it before the six month period expires, they can always reapply. It is much more likely however that those who are rejected do not.

I've actually given [other people with disabilities] my lawyers information and told them it could take anywhere from six months to two years. They've been lucky enough to have it only take six months. And then I've also had people who have not followed through. The system has failed them so much in the past that they're afraid to continue because they don't want to be failed again. That's [the state of mind] where I know a lot of the homeless people are, because the system has failed them so many times. They're afraid to trust the system anymore. And that's a hard thing to get them to trust again ... When I'm helping people I'm trying to let them know that 'you just have to go the right route. You've just been

⁹⁸ "Assisted Housing: National and Local | HUD USER."

⁹⁹ "Housing Voucher Success and Utilization Indicators, and Understanding Utilization Data | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities."

¹⁰⁰ Finkel and Buron, "Study on Section 8 Voucher Success Rates."

in the wrong place and you just need some help. You need to call these numbers, see this person.' They're still skeptical.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Individual living in subsidized housing, interviewed by author March 2023

Conclusions

There's a lot of people in my building that smoke heroin. And they let people in and those people go into the bathroom to smoke. Luckily I haven't found any needles and I'm grateful about that. It's just, you go into the bathroom and you're like, 'oh my god, it smells like somebody just inflated a tire'. It's better than smelling poop ... but it's supposed to be a clean and sober building. I can't believe that people don't catch them. But it's going to come down on them, that's how I understand it.¹⁰²

There is no single solution or strategy that can be used to 'solve' homelessness, or that will even provide a benefit to every person without a home. Living without stable housing is stressful, and over time creates traumas that present differently in every single person. While there are common services that people enjoy and rely on, it is no guarantee that everyone will be able to use them. Often, the ways other people express their own trauma can be a stressful or triggering environment for some houseless individuals to be around. Yet, by limiting where houseless individuals can be through social, political, and economic systems of exclusion, we force people with numerous traumas, needs, and ways of being in close proximity to each other. Individuals who are actively using drugs end up next to people who are struggling with sobriety. A person with a sensitivity to noise is excluded from a space where people are loud and extroverted, while those with a compulsion to make noise are shut out from spaces that might be tolerable to the former. These accumulative stressors, repeated consistently and over the course of weeks, months, or years, can gradually build to become unbearable. Housed individuals have a greater ability to change their environment to minimize the allostatic load, but for those living on the streets it can be intolerable. Mental illness, drug abuse, and other chronic disabling factors lower the threshold of discomfort and stress that individuals are able to deal with.

¹⁰² Street Roots Vendor, interviewed by author January 2023.

Even among individuals in housing, stressors such as a repeated neglect of maintenance can have profound impacts. Sustainable design traditionally has meant design that is energy efficient and has a low amount of embodied carbon. Embodied carbon represents the amount of carbon emissions released during the lifecycle of the building materials, from their harvesting and processing to their transportation and construction at site. A complete accounting of the energy used by the building traditionally has included both embodied energy and the energy used during its anticipated lifespan. Recently, changes in the uses of cities and downtowns from office space to badly needed housing has forced architects to think of buildings not just as structures with a single intended use case, but as a framework that could accommodate changing environments, economies, and societal trends. Today, buildings are often torn down not because they are structurally unsound, but because their use case does not match what is needed in the city. Maintenance is also a requirement of sustainability. Oftentimes, the ability to repair systems that inevitably become damaged is well known to building managers and technicians, but rarely considered by policymakers and architects beyond the inclusion of an access hatch. As unrepaired equipment can have disastrous results for the building and residents alike, there are two things that need to be done. The first and most important is a budget to conduct essential repairs on buildings, and a system to ensure that repairs get done. The second is an acknowledgement by architects, manufacturers, and policy makers that things do break and that they need to be either more resilient or easier to repair.

Providing a diversity of services and spaces is an essential part of assisting recovery from traumas and removing barriers to housing. People are typically very good at removing themselves from stressful situations if they are able. Even simple options, such as the choice between having privacy and communication, or being outside and inside can make a massive

difference. Unfortunately, one of the largest barriers to connecting people with services is the services themselves. Repeated traumas and bad experiences have led many chronically homeless individuals to grow resigned to living outside of the system. Personalized assistance, both for unhoused individuals and those with housing have shown to dramatically increase success rates in programs that use them (as discussed in chapter 2). Over the last few years, Portland has dedicated more monetary assistance to homelessness than it ever has in its past. The most effective ways to use those funds is not to use broad, blunt strategies for every individual, but rather to be specific. Address the individual barriers preventing people from becoming housed and recognize that those barriers are different for everyone. The people interviewed, and the perspectives shared in this thesis account for far less than 1% of the stories and needs on the street. Rather, it is the process of listening and learning from the people most at risk that I hope becomes more common among those financially able to make a difference.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Consent for Research Participation

Consent for Research Participation
Title: Barriers to Creating and Accessing Affordable Housing in Portland, Oregon.
Researcher(s): Max Weisenbloom, University of Oregon
Researcher Contact Info: (503) 758-0550
mweisen3@uoregon.edu

Key Information for You to Consider

- **Voluntary Consent.** You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. It is up to you whether you choose to participate or not. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you choose not to participate or discontinue participation at any time.
- **Purpose.** The purpose of this research is to contextualize existing studies on housing affordability with anecdotes, and reveal aspects of the lack of affordable housing that are hard for other methods of research to show. You are being asked to participate because you have unique insights and perspectives that are valuable to this study. Approximately 20-30 people will take part in this research.
- **Duration.** Your participation will last approximately 20-30 minutes.
- **Procedures and Activities.** You will be asked to fill out a short survey, and complete a casual interview centered around your experiences with finding housing and navigating the housing assistance systems.
- **What happens to the information collected for this research?** Information collected for this research will be used to document the state of affordable housing in Portland. We may publish/present the results of this research. However, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential unless you explicitly consent to have your name used.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

- I agree to the use of audio recording for data analysis only.
 I consent to participate in this study.



Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Group 1 Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions below to the best of your ability. If you do not wish to answer the question, check the "I do not wish to answer" box. If you fall into multiple groups, feel free to check multiple options.

What is your age?

- 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 >75
 Prefer not to answer

How would you describe your Race?

- White Black Native American or Alaskan Native Asian
 Pacific Islander Other Race _____ Prefer not to answer

How would you describe your Ethnicity?

- Hispanic or Latino Not Hispanic or Latino _____
Prefer not to answer

How would you describe your Gender?

- Man Woman Non-Binary _____ Prefer not to answer

Do you identify with any of the below categories?

- Gay / Lesbian / Bi / Asexual Transgender Queer Prefer not to answer

Have you experienced domestic or sexual violence?

- Yes No Prefer not to answer

What is your current housing situation?

- Unsheltered, sleeping on the street. Unhoused, in shelter with family or friends Housed Prefer not to answer Living

Have you in the past:



Experienced homelessness Experienced Eviction Prefer not to answer

Domestic status:

Married / have partner Single Prefer not to answer

Do you have Dependent Children?

Under 12 12 - 18 Over 18 Prefer not to answer

Support Network: Do you have

Housed Family in Portland Housed Friends in Portland Unhoused
Family in Portland Prefer not to answer

How long have you been living in Portland?

Under 1 year 1-10 years Over 10 years Prefer not to answer



Appendix 3: Promotional Materials

Requesting Volunteers for Conversation about Housing

Experience:

You will be asked to fill out a short survey, and participate in a casual interview centered around your experiences with finding housing and navigating the housing assistance systems.

Time: 20-30 minutes

Compensation: \$15 Gift Card to [Grocery Store]

If interested, please contact **Max Weisenbloom**

Email:
mweisen3@uoregon.edu

Text or Call:
(503) 758-0550

Or visit this location during the hours of:

Dec. [X], between [Time 1] and [Time 2]

Dec. [X], between [] and []

Jan. [X], between [] and []

If you wish to participate but don't have a reliable means of contact (access to phone or email), the staff at [organization] can assist you in sending the researchers a message.

<p>Research Opportunity mweisen3@uoregon.edu (503) 758-0550</p>	<p>Research Opportunity mweisen3@uoregon.edu (503) 758-0550</p>	<p>Research Opportunity mweisen3@uoregon.edu (503) 758-0550</p>	<p>Research Opportunity mweisen3@uoregon.edu (503) 758-0550</p>	<p>Research Opportunity mweisen3@uoregon.edu (503) 758-0550</p>	<p>Research Opportunity mweisen3@uoregon.edu (503) 758-0550</p>	<p>Research Opportunity mweisen3@uoregon.edu (503) 758-0550</p>
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Bibliography

- “2020 Housing Affordability Report | Value of Jobs.” Accessed September 7, 2022. <https://portlandalliance.com/advocacy/2020-housing-affordability.html>.
- “About Us.” Accessed May 25, 2023. <https://blanchethouse.org/aboutus/>.
- Asher, Abe. “Unhoused and Unaided.” *Portland Mercury*. Accessed May 11, 2023. <https://www.portlandmercury.com/homeless/2023/05/10/46502004/unhoused-and-unaided>.
- “Assisted Housing: National and Local | HUD USER.” Accessed May 25, 2023. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/assthsg.html>.
- Aurand, Andrew. “Density, Housing Types and Mixed Land Use: Smart Tools for Affordable Housing?” *Urban Studies* 47, no. 5 (May 2010): 1015–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098009353076>.
- Aurand, Andrew, Dan Emmanuel, Emma Foley, Matt Clarke, Ikra Rafi, and Diane Yentel. “The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes.” National Low Income Housing Coalition, March 2023.
- Aurand, Andrew, Dan Emmanuel, Ikra Rafi, Dan Threet, and Diane Yentel. “Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing 2021.” National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2021.
- Beddow, Alissa. “2022 State of Housing in Portland.” Portland Housing Bureau, March 2023.
- Bergman, Peter, Raj Chetty, DeLuca Stefanie, Nathaniel Hendren, Lawrence F Katz, and Christopher Palmer. “Creating Moves to Opportunity: Experimental Evidence on Barriers to Neighborhood Choice,” January 2023, 109.
- Bureau, US Census. “Income in the United States: 2021.” *Census.gov*. Accessed May 25, 2023. <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2022/demo/p60-276.html>.
- . “National Poverty in America Awareness Month: January 2022.” *Census.gov*. Accessed May 19, 2022. <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/stories/poverty-awareness-month.html>.
- Colburn, Gregg, and Clayton Page Aldern. *Homelessness Is a Housing Problem: How Structural Factors Explain U.S. Patterns*. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2022.
- Conklin, Tiffany. “2019 Point In Time Count of Homelessness in Portland/Gresham/Multnomah County, Oregon.” Joint Office of Homeless Services, April 30, 2019.
- Elliott, Debi, and Mary Oschwald. “2022 Point In Time Count of People Experiencing HUD Homelessness in Portland/Gresham/Multnomah County, Oregon on January 26, 2022.” Joint Office of Homeless Services, July 29, 2022.

Eviction Defense and Diversion Team. “Eviction Defense & Diversion Research Annual Data Brief: Cases Filed in the Calendar Year 2022 January to December.” Portland State University, January 15, 2022.

Finkel, Meryl, and Larry Buron. “Study on Section 8 Voucher Success Rates.” US Department of Housing and Urban Development, November 2001.

Friedman, Gordon. “In Portland’s Old Town Chinatown, a \$57 Million Rebirth Promise Broken.” *oregonlive*, October 17, 2018. <https://www.oregonlive.com/news/erry-2018/10/c733b80ee4931/in-portlands-old-town-chinatown.html>.

Goodman, Lisa, Katya Fels, and Catherine Glenn. “No Safe Place: Sexual Assault in the Lives of Homeless Women.” *National Resource Center on Domestic Violence*, September 2006. <https://vawnet.org/material/no-safe-place-sexual-assault-lives-homeless-women>.

“Governance, Costs, and Revenue Raising to Address and Prevent Homelessness in the Portland Tri-County Area.” Portland State University Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative, 2019.

“Homeless Homicides - Google Drive.” Accessed May 14, 2023. https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/0/d/11zXZbCIv74L217BC5cqFzAaJU7AJ8caQG00I_qxU_Y4/htmlview#gid=0.

“Housing Voucher Success and Utilization Indicators, and Understanding Utilization Data | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities,” March 4, 2019. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/housing-voucher-success-and-utilization-indicators-and-understanding-utilization>.

kgw.com. “Homeless Bused out of Portland, but Some Still on the Street.” Accessed May 24, 2023. <https://www.kgw.com/article/news/investigations/homeless-bused-out-of-portland-but-some-still-on-the-street/283-425448690>.

kgw.com. “Portland City Council Votes to Extend Contract with Rapid Response, Camp Cleanups to Resume,” January 1, 2020. <https://www.kgw.com/article/news/local/portland-city-council-rapid-response-contract/283-ba7f4eac-80a3-4680-9643-8a992b79b5d6>.

kgw.com. “Tax to Fund Homeless Services in Portland Metro Area Passes,” May 8, 2020. <https://www.kgw.com/article/news/politics/elections/results-measure-26-210-portlands-homeless-services-tax/283-9ee07e79-7c24-4b5a-b893-f5fd94cac7ae>.

KOIN.com. “Memo Suggests Mass Shelters in Portland Staffed by National Guard,” February 12, 2022. <https://www.koin.com/news/portland-sam-adams-memo-homeless-shelters-national-guard/>.

Krishnan, Uma, and Debi Elliott. “2017 Point In Time Count of Homelessness in Portland/Gresham/Multnomah County, Oregon.” City of Portland, October 2017.

- LANKENAU, STEPHEN E. “STRONGER THAN DIRT: Public Humiliation and Status Enhancement among Panhandlers.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 28, no. 3 (1999): 288–318.
- Lewis, Melissa. “Police Know Arrests Won’t Fix Homelessness. They Keep Making Them Anyway.” *Reveal*, June 23, 2022. <http://revealnews.org/article/homeless-unhoused-police-arrests-west-coast-cities/>.
- Metro. “Supportive Housing Services: Addressing Homelessness in Greater Portland,” January 3, 2022. <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/supportive-housing-services/regional-coordination>.
- “Millions of Renters Fall Short of a Comfortable Standard of Living | Joint Center for Housing Studies.” Accessed September 7, 2022. <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/millions-renters-fall-short-comfortable-standard-living>.
- Multnomah County. “NEWS RELEASE: Tri-County Point in Time Count Numbers, Shared Regionally for First Time, Show Shifts in Homelessness,” May 4, 2022. <https://www.multco.us/johs/news/news-release-tri-county-point-time-count-numbers-shared-regionally-first-time-show-shifts>.
- “Multnomah County Supportive Housing Services Annual Report FFY 2022.” Joint Office of Homeless Services, n.d.
- opb. “Portland Leaders Celebrated Milepost 5. Now It’s a Lesson in How Not to Do Affordable Housing.” Accessed May 21, 2023. <https://www.opb.org/article/2023/02/21/milepost-5-portland-tentants-lawsuit-neglect-livability-affordable-housing/>.
- “Oregon Health Authority : Data and Analysis : Suicide Prevention : State of Oregon.” Accessed May 15, 2023. <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/preventionwellness/safeliving/suicideprevention/pages/sdata.aspx>.
- Portland.gov. “Inclusionary Housing.” Accessed June 10, 2022. <https://www.portland.gov/phb/inclusionary-housing>.
- Reinhard, Daniel. “How Much Do They Make? A Systematic Review of Income Generated From Begging.” *International Criminal Justice Review* 33, no. 1 (March 1, 2023): 66–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10575677211036498>.
- “Reports | Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program | Portland.Gov,” May 9, 2023. <https://www.portland.gov/homelessnessimpactreduction/news/reports>.
- Smock, Kristina. “2013 Point In Time Count of Homelessness in Portland/Multnomah County, Oregon.” Portland Housing Bureau, June 2013.
- . “2015 Point In Time Count of Homelessness in Portland/Gresham/Multnomah County, Oregon.” City of Portland, June 2015.

- Tableau Software. “Interactive Report Summarizing the Type and Number of Report Offenses by Neighborhood in the City of Portland.” Accessed May 14, 2023. https://public.tableau.com/views/New_Monthly_Neighborhood/MonthlyOffenseTotals?%3Adisplay_static_image=y&%3AbootstrapWhenNotified=true&%3Aembed=true&%3Alanguage=en-US&:embed=y&:showVizHome=n&:apiID=host0#navType=0&navSrc=Parse.
- the Guardian. “Bussed out: How America Moves Thousands of Homeless People around the Country.” Accessed August 1, 2022. <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2017/dec/20/bussed-out-america-moves-homeless-people-country-study>.
- “The Spike; Homelessness in London.” *The Economist* 408, no. 8846 (July 27, 2013): 28(US)-28(US).
- “The State of the Nation’s Housing 2022.” Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2022.
- “Tri-County Region Shares 2023 Point in Time Count | Washington County, OR.” Accessed May 20, 2023. <https://www.washingtoncountyor.gov/housing/news/2023/05/10/tri-county-region-shares-2023-point-time-count>.
- Walters, Jaime, Bryan Evans, and Jennifer Vines. “Domicile Unknown: Review of Deaths among People Experiencing Homelessness in Multnomah County in 2021.” Multnomah County Health Department, February 2023.
- Walters, Jaime, and Paul Lewis. “Domicile Unknown: Review of Deaths among People Experiencing Homelessness in Multnomah County in 2018.” Multnomah County Health Department, n.d.
- . “Domicile Unknown: Review of Deaths among People Experiencing Homelessness in Multnomah County in 2019.” Multnomah County Health Department, n.d.
- Walters, Jaime, Amy Zlot, and Paul Lewis. “Domicile Unknown: Review of Deaths among People Experiencing Homelessness in Multnomah County in 2015.” Multnomah County Health Department, n.d.
- . “Domicile Unknown: Review of Deaths among People Experiencing Homelessness in Multnomah County in 2016.” Multnomah County Health Department, n.d.
- . “Domicile Unknown: Review of Deaths among People Experiencing Homelessness in Multnomah County in 2017.” Multnomah County Health Department, n.d.
- Walters, Jamie, Jennifer Vines, and Paul Lewis. “Domicile Unknown: Review of Deaths among People Experiencing Homelessness in Multnomah County in 2020.” Multnomah County Health Department, n.d.

Willamette Week. “Won’t Word Get Out That Portland Is a Shangri-La for Those Without a Home?” November 24, 2022. <https://www.wweek.com/news/dr-know/2022/11/24/wont-the-word-get-out-that-portland-is-a-shangri-la-for-those-without-a-home/>.

Writing in the Flat Keys: Thacher Schmid’s Portfolio. “Homeless Homicides Are On the Rise,” March 23, 2023. <https://thacherschmid.com/2023/03/23/homeless-homicides-are-on-the-rise/>.