



Clean Streets, a project of Central City Concern, helps urban campers maintain a tidy campsite

PORTLAND/MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

Taking many roads to 'A Home for Everyone'

With 142,000 new jobs¹ and 123,000 new households projected from 2010–2035, Portland is experiencing remarkable economic prosperity—and a remarkable housing crisis. Homelessness, specifically unsheltered homelessness, is one of the most visible manifestations of the uneven nature of the area's economic growth.

Portland has an unsheltered population of over 2,000 people on a given night. Public health and safety agencies are collaborating with homeless services providers on outreach and public space management to mitigate conditions and conflicts that inevitably arise. While there are some promising innovations underway in Portland and Multnomah County, these non-punitive practices are not universal, and overall progress on reducing unsheltered homelessness has not been achieved.

A HOME FOR EVERYONE IS A JOINTLY LED INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

In 2013, Greater Portland's efforts to address homelessness led to an initiative strengthening collaboration around housing-focused solutions and reducing housing access disparities for people of color. This initiative, called A Home for Everyone, is jointly led by the cities of Portland and Gresham, Multnomah County, and the area housing authority, Home Forward.

HOUSING FIRST APPROACH

Priority is given to providing people with permanent housing as quickly and directly as possible.

SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION MILESTONES

- > Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, 2004
- > A Home for Everyone adopted, March 2013
- > Portland declares a state of emergency for homelessness, 2015
- > Joint Office of Homeless Services established, June 2016
- > Portland voters approved a bond that will fund 1,300 units of affordable housing, including 300 units of permanent supportive housing, 2016
- > Portland recognized for achieving a functional end to Veteran homelessness by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), 2017
- > Net proceeds from the \$5 million sale of Multnomah County jail facility earmarked for permanent supportive housing, 2018
- > Regionally, Metro voters approved a bond for 700 units of deeply affordable housing, 2018

A Home for Everyone emphasizes reducing inflow into homelessness and increasing the number of people returning to permanent housing through a focus on temporary accommodations, rehousing, and collaboration on outreach and public space management to assist the unsheltered homeless population.

INNOVATIVE PRACTICE: JOINT CITY-COUNTY GOVERNANCE MODEL

The City of Portland and Multnomah County homeless program administration systems merged to form the Joint Office of Homeless Services. In addition to planning and funding the services system, the Joint Office facilitates strategic conversations between the city and the county, and with federal and state agencies. The Joint Office is funded primarily by local, state, and federal government sources.

Programs that receive Joint Office funding must participate in the region's homeless management information system and in its coordinated entry system for accessing housing services. The Joint Office staff is charged with addressing homelessness, which it generally implements through

long-standing partnerships with a range of community-based organizations delivering a range of homeless services. The Joint Office also maintains formal and informal partnerships with first responders (police, sheriff, and fire/EMS), local health care, criminal justice, and child welfare systems. The joint approach has resulted in recognition for achieving a functional end to Veteran homelessness. Additionally, two bond issues passed by voters indicate confidence in the strategy.

A Home for Everyone governance structure

The Executive Committee leading this initiative includes Portland's Mayor and Housing Commissioner, the Chair and a second Commissioner from the Board of County Commissioners, a City Council member from Gresham, the Director of Home Forward, and representatives from the faith, philanthropic, and business communities. The executive committee is supported by a coordinating board staffed by the Joint Office of Homeless Services and comprised of community members and leaders from the non-profit, health, education, public safety, business, and government sectors, as well as several strategic coordinating board subcommittees.

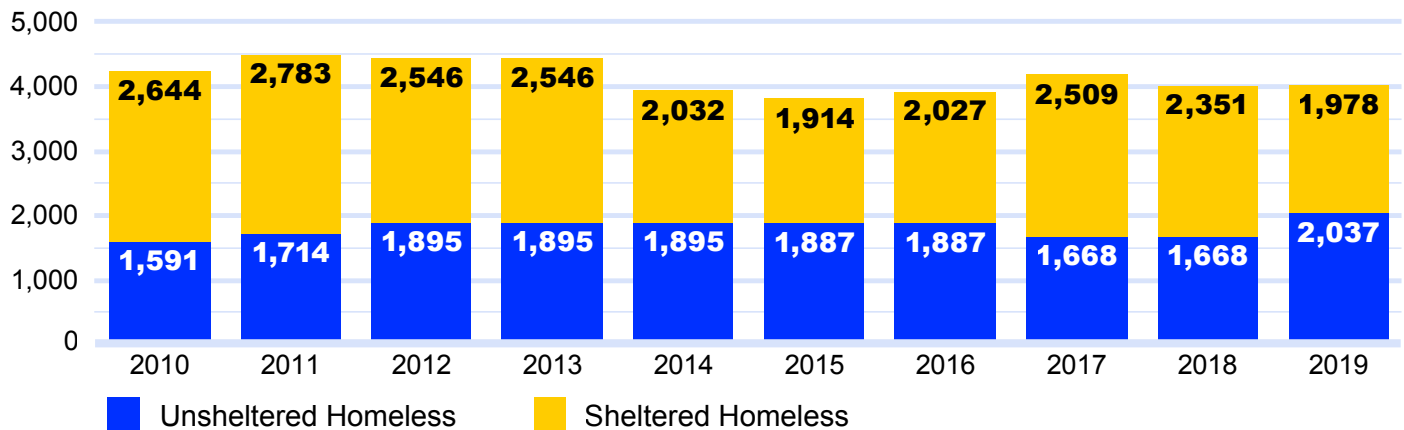


Deputy DeWayne McQueen of the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office HOPE Team checks out a campsite under a highway bridge and in the woods of the National Forest. The campsite would meet "low impact" requirements as it is tidy but the open fire is hazardous. The latter would likely make it target for clean up by transportation officials.

“We recognized that the Sheriff's Office can't solve homelessness, but we also understand that we must address livability concerns within our community. Through collaboration with the local social service providers, we work to lessen the impacts that being houseless has on our citizens.”

*Captain Travis Gullberg
Multnomah County Sheriff's Office*

Portland/Multnomah County, OR Homelessness Trends



Unsheltered homelessness is rising despite overall reduction in homelessneses over past decade.

Note: Portland conducts an unsheltered homeless survey every other year on odd years and a sheltered count annually

Source: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-homeless-populations-and-subpopulations-reports/>

INNOVATIVE PRACTICE:

SHERIFF'S OFFICE TAKES ON A LEADERSHIP ROLE

The Homeless Outreach and Programs Engagement or HOPE Team was formed by the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office to engage unhoused individuals outside of the incorporated city limits. The HOPE Team's operations are a regular Sheriff's Office budget item. The Joint Office of Homeless Services helps the HOPE Team build partnerships with community agencies to overcome misperceptions about law enforcement's role and collaborate on providing services. The number of supportive services and housing providers willing to collaborate with the HOPE Team is growing. An overall decline in calls received—notably repeated requests from the same encampment—is an indication of the program's impact.

The HOPE Team

- Helps unhoused people connect to community resources and find housing options
- Helps those living in encampments understand how to keep a low impact campsite (e.g., orderly and tidy with trash well-managed, not obstructing other public uses, no immediate health or fire hazards)

A HOME FOR EVERYONE²

Our Vision

No one should be homeless—everyone needs a safe, stable place to call home.

Guiding Values

- Prioritize the most vulnerable
- Promote racial and ethnic justice
- Hold the programs we fund accountable and use data to make decisions
- Engage and involve the community
- Strengthen system capacity and increase leveraging opportunities

Strategy Areas

Housing, health, employment, Veterans, and safety off the streets (shelter and emergency services)

- Encourages the adoption of a progressive approach to clearing encampments (i.e., services first with adequate notice, protection of personal property)
- Provides public education on why people are unhoused, gaps in resources, and Sheriff's Office activities in addressing unsheltered homelessness

INNOVATIVE PRACTICE:

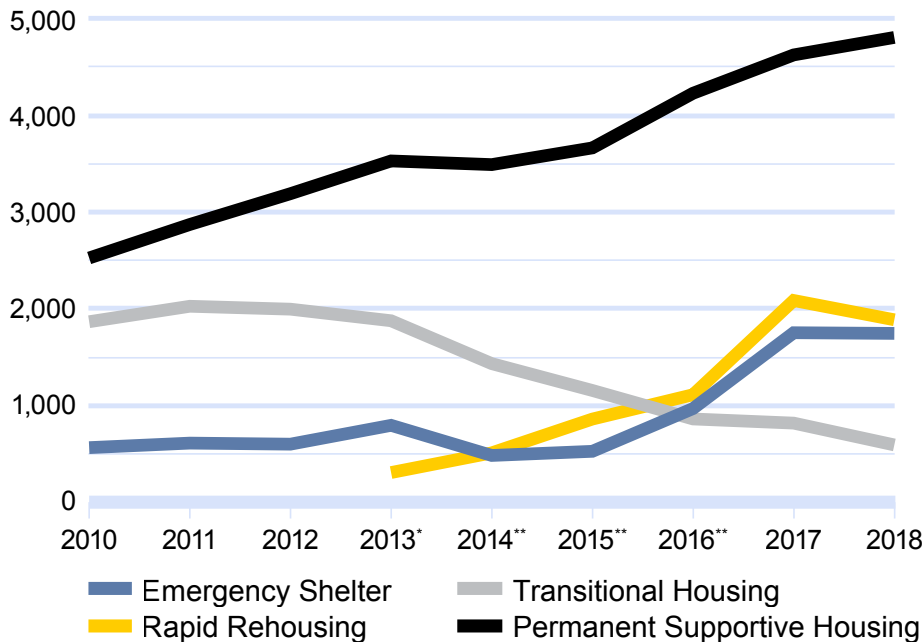
INVOLVE PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

People with lived experience of homelessness can provide insight into program planning and implementation that can increase effectiveness and impact. People with such experience participate extensively in Portland-area homeless services programs. While it is too soon to tell whether these practices will result in reductions in unsheltered homelessness, interviewees consistently stated that including perspectives of people with lived experience and prioritizing hiring those with that experience was both a sound practice and essential to advancing equity.

A Home for Everyone's Equity Committee

A Home for Everyone's Equity Committee ensures that the voices and perspectives of those with lived experience guide the work. The Joint Office of Homeless Services provides stipends to offset costs associated with participation.

Portland/Multnomah County, OR Total Year-Round Beds Trends



Portland/Multnomah County total year-round beds trends reflects increased investment.

* 2013 Counts RRH in Total Year-Round Beds, HMIS Participation, and Total Beds for Households with/without Children.

** 2014–2016 has two types of RRH values: one that includes demonstration programs and one that excludes demonstration programs. The value including demonstration programs was used for Total Year-Round Beds (RRH).

Source: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3031/pit-and-hic-data-since-2007/>

Central City Concern's Clean Start

Central City Concern (CCC) focuses on the development of peer relationships that nurture and support personal transformation and recovery. Peer support is woven into all CCC programs. Clean Start is their mentored work experience program. CCC is committed to hiring graduates from the program, who have held positions ranging from building maintenance and office staff to case managers and medical professionals.

Clean Start receives partial funding from The Corporation for National and Community Service's Social Innovation Fund through a competitively awarded "pay for success" funding agreement. Clean Start also has contracts for services with the business improvement district and the cities of Gresham and Portland.

Transition Projects' mentoring program

Transition Projects' mentoring program helps individuals identify and harness their strengths, support systems, resources, and skills. Individuals often connect to employment. The program is committed to creating an equitable organization inclusive and representative of the communities they serve.

“We can only solve homelessness by increasing access to and the supply of affordable housing.”

Marc Jolin
Director

Joint Office of Homeless Services

KEY LESSONS

Center systems on meeting the needs of people

By grounding the work in beliefs that “homelessness is unacceptable” and “ending homelessness is possible,” the community created a focus on helping people rather than protecting organizational agendas. Provide those with lived experience of homelessness the agency to address and create solutions, as well as offering culturally specific responses.

Center on equity

Portland has integrated racial equity into its A Home for Everyone initiative and has participated in the Center for Social Innovation's SPARC (Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities) project on racism and homelessness. The city is exploring how a focus on equity can improve police responses to homelessness.

Address inflow by creating more permanent housing options

Voters in Portland and Multnomah County approved bond issues to provide more permanent housing. The City of Portland enlisted the Corporation for Supportive Housing to assist in designing new partnerships and expanding permanent supportive housing. Inflow into homelessness was reduced by providing short-term rent assistance and working with institutions to prevent discharges into homelessness.

Retool emergency shelters and add capacity to reduce barriers

Eliminating sobriety and ‘no pets’ rules enable more people to enter a shelter. Under A Home for Everyone, there has been an increase in access to low-barrier emergency shelter. Through this initiative, the community has added more low-barrier emergency shelters with housing-focused supportive services, piloted a new mobile mental health team for shelter residents with serious mental illness, and developed village-style shelter options with temporary accommodations in pods sharing hygiene and cooking facilities.

“Portland is a very prosperous community, but it has not been shared prosperity. We have focused on partnership, collaboration, and coordination with homeless services providers, private sector, faith community, and government. We created the Joint Office on Homeless Services with the County as part of ‘A Home for Everyone’ plan. We doubled shelter capacity, expanded outreach, and acted on our commitment for 2,000 new permanent supportive housing units.”

*Mayor Ted Wheeler
City of Portland*



The Multnomah County Sheriff's Office HOPE Team checks in with people who are unsheltered and staying on state park lands.

Employ non-punitive practices

The greater Portland area is using a number of alternative policing approaches, based on a services-first approach to engagement and response to complaints. Within city boundaries, mental health workers partner with special law officers for intensive outreach and engagement, healthcare providers and justice institutions work to avoid homelessness upon discharge, and police officers working through the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program (LEAD®) redirect low-level drug offenders to intensive case management. Outside of city boundaries, Multnomah County's HOPE Team builds relationships and connects vulnerable people to needed services and a path to a home.

Strive for public spaces that are healthy and accessible to all residents

Managing public spaces to be safe, sanitary, and accessible to all residents is challenging but necessary. It benefits those who are housed and those living unhoused. The greater Portland area has many examples of inclusive public space management practices, although it has struggled to make these practices universal.

Communicate progress while educating about causes and challenges

Compassion fatigue can erode the belief that homelessness is solvable. Initiative leaders are working to alleviate compassion fatigue by communicating progress and educating about causes and strategies being deployed to reduce homelessness.

SOLUTIONS BASED ON EVIDENCE

Arnold Ventures (AV) is a philanthropic organization with the mission to invest in evidence-based solutions that maximize opportunities and minimize injustice. AV supported a study to identify practices and policies that promote alternatives to using punitive and enforcement-based measures as the primary responses to unsheltered homelessness. Project investigators conducted a three-day visit in spring–summer 2019 to each of nine sites for an in-person review of community-specific initiatives. The sites represent the major regions of the U.S. and include cities of different sizes as well as rural, suburban, and tribal areas and provide an array of different socioeconomic contexts and present different local housing market configurations.

1 For more information see the City of Portland's 2015 Growth Scenarios Report at: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/531170>

2 <http://ahomeforeveryone.net/whoweare>

