

Housing Opportunities Action Council

SPECIAL POPULATION RESULTS – PART 1 – February 22, 2017

In February 2017, the Housing Opportunities Action Council asked populations experiencing housing instability or homelessness 3 questions to gather feedback to inform the mid-point update to the “Ten Year Plan to Address Homelessness.” Benton County Health Services staff (Harm Reduction Specialist, ACT Team, and Mental Health and Housing Coordinator) incorporated the questions into their daily interactions with clients, with 82 clients participating to date (n = 59, Harm Reduction; n = 19, ACT Team; n = 4, Mental Health & Housing).

What has helped you find housing in the past?

Friends or Family

- Staying with friends (10 responses) or family (5 responses)
- Family help (6 responses)
- Word of mouth (3 responses), social networking (4 responses)

Transitional Housing/Shelter

- Oxford House (3 responses)
- Shelters (3 responses), Women’s shelter (2 responses)
- Harriet Hughes housing (2 responses). She does not conduct background checks.
- Partner’s Place (2 responses)
- Clean and sober houses.
- Chances Housing Program
- Landlords and people being willing to give me an opportunity.

Rent Assistance/Subsidies

- HUD/Section 8 (6 responses), government resources (3 responses)
- Linn Benton County Housing Authority
- Housing assistance (2 responses)

Income/Employment

- Had an income (4 responses) or job (4 responses).

Addiction Services/Treatment

- Clean and sober (4 responses)
- Treatment facility
- Drug court

Case Management/Supported Services/Community Resources

- Benton County Housing Coordinator (6 responses), Benton County ACT Team (5 responses)
- Supported services - VA (2 responses), Supportive Services for Veteran’s Families
- Advocates, Case worker
- Love INC, Gleaners, Churches

Other

- Nothing (5 responses), No help (2 responses)
- Haven’t had housing (2 responses).
- Do not like the indoors (2 responses)
- Live in a tent, sleeping in van, homeless camps, Illegal living situations
- Still homeless / homeless for 35 years.
- No obstacles in the past.
- Craigslist (5 responses), internet (2 responses), newspapers, search on own, property manager

What are the biggest challenges that you have [in your current housing/finding housing]?

Income/Employment/Education

- No money / Income (20 responses)/ No jobs (10 responses) / Paying for rent
- Lack of SSI
- Lack of showers prevents homeless from gaining employment.
- Finding and keeping a job.
- No work record.
- It's hard to afford low-income housing then you are beyond poor.
- No education (2 responses)

Criminal History/Rental History/Credit History/Etc.

- Criminal history, no rental history, landlord laws, applications getting immediately denied based on the criteria and not meeting the person. "Red flags"
- Criminal history (10 responses) / Background check (3 responses) / Sex crime
- No rental history (5 responses) / Bad rental history (4 responses)
 - Past eviction being held against me. Was in the apartment 20 years and then evicted.
 - Evictions cycle.
 - I'm disabled and was taken advantage of by visitors which caused eviction
 - Communicating with landlords (feeling I'm not professional enough to talk to landlords).
- Credit history (2 responses) / Credit check (2 responses)
- No ID (3 responses)
- No permanent mailing address.

Addictions and Mental Health

- Addictions (9 responses) / Staying clean (4 responses) / Hard to get into rehab
 - The challenges of addiction and not able to bring self out of the drug culture.
- Mental health (2 responses). "My own head"
- Low self-esteem. Self-conditioned to be homeless.

- Being alienated from local society - being isolated.
- Shame.
- Drive/will to find housing (2 responses)
- Down and out.

Affordable and Low-Income Housing

- Lack of affordable housing (11 responses)
- Long HUD / housing waiting list (4 responses)
- Rent is too high because of OSU (2 responses).
- The value of the dollar and the high price of real estate.
- Usually affordable space is in code violation.
- "Poverty with a view: living poor in high-end city."
- Single male/non-college student only has a 3% chance of finding house.
- Lack of resource to provide housing assistance.
- Rental criteria saying 3x income. I'm disabled and disqualified based on that criteria because SSI is at \$735 a month.
- No prison transitional housing. Felons and addicts are a disgrace of this world.
- No felon-friendly housing.
- Availability to my current physical needs. Disabilities.

Other

- Finding someone to work with your situation
- Transportation and knowing who to talk to.
- Security - Locked entry / protocols. Feel vulnerable in confined spaces.
- Don't like to be indoors.
- Weather.
- Squatting.
- Finding a place to sleep.
- Need energy assistance help.
- Getting a phone.
- Having animals.
- My current living situation with housing is comfortable. None at this time. (2 responses)

What do you think this community needs to do to prevent and end homelessness?

Camp Site/Basic Amenities

- Provide a place to camp (5 responses) with bathrooms (2 responses), showers, trash cans, etc.
- Public showers. Public restroom need to be open in winter.
- Build cubicles with beds. The Japanese created this housing solution.
- Building housing trailers.

Shelter

- More shelters (4 responses)
- Year round shelter (2 responses)
- Increase the hours of shelters. Leave later and open earlier, 6 pm to 10 am.
- More cold weather shelters.
- Bigger cold weather shelter.
- Open bigger shelter.
- Warming shelters and drop in (free showers & laundry).
- Improve conditions of shelters.
- Permanent shelter in Corvallis.
- A homeless shelter with case management.
- More clean and sober shelters.
- A shelter that caters to addictions and domestic violence.
- Homeless shelters with food banks.
- Shelters that allow pets.
- More COIs.

Education & Awareness of Services/Resources

- Keep providing services, outreach, advocates & housing.
- Educate people in poverty about accessing services.
- More advertising targeting the homeless about resources. Positive stories about persons in transition.
- Networking to figure out what resources are available.
- Education of homeless persons to increase well-being.
- Need better resources. More resources.

Support and Case Management

- More case management (2 responses). Holding their hands.
- Offer more support and solid plans to get people in to homes.
- Better support system
- Advocates for social security
- Supportive housing.
- Give support to independent living.
- Helping with finances.
- Get more money from the government.
- Help people with bad backgrounds.
- Fully understand the problem. Education on how to work with people with mental health and/or addictions. Community first response team to focus on specific needs of the individual they are working with. Individualized and patient centered research (assessing) and creating a patient centered action plan. "How can help or solve a problem for people they don't fully understand." We have the services and resources...We have the organizations, grants, the willingness to address the problem, but the people have to have the training and understanding.

Transitional and Supportive Housing

- More transitional housing options.
- More Oxford houses (3 responses)
- More Partners Places (2 responses)
- More housing first accommodations.
- More sober housing.

Affordable and Low-Income Housing

- More no - (1 response) or low income housing (7 responses)
- More affordable housing (5 responses)
- Corvallis, City, and OSU should support low-income housing.
- Create more realistic/affordable housing for individuals outside of the University.
- Provide low-income public housing.
- An entire complex for Section 8. Way to sign up that accommodates the individual.
- Build more income-based housing.
- Build houses for the poor.
- More housing opportunities (2 Responses)
 - Grateful I currently have a nice place away from cold weather and snow.
- Regulate OSU regarding housing.
- Put people in houses (2 responses).
- Fast-track housing access.
- Cheap motel rooms.
- Housing assistance.

Employment/ Training

- Put people to work.
- Jobs for skill vets that are realistic
- More jobs (2 responses)
- Train homeless people for jobs. Over 50 years old have problems being hired.
- Job program.
- Good paying jobs.
- Give work. Agreement to behave.

Addictions and Mental Health Treatment

- Homeless drug/alcohol treatment. Dual-diagnosis treatment.
- Help with addictions.
- Making sure the homeless are healthy.
- Clean & sober.
- Mental illness and addiction - people receiving social security money to buy drugs.
- Homeless people need addiction services.
- The awareness that mental health issues along with un-sober lifestyle needs to be addressed.
- Drug court.

Policy Strategies

- Make illegal to discriminate against person with felony. Addressing past legal issues and bad credit.
- Influence landlords/property management to end discrimination.
- Child-support took 50% of income, need for child support modernization. Domestic custody for fathers in the State of Oregon has hurt men, leading to homelessness.
- Reduce gentrification.
- Set land aside for low-income individuals.
- Legalize squatting.
- Changing the laws about no cause evictions.
- Grandma cottages. People who are looking for affordable housing do not own cars.
- Lower the rental rate in city (2 responses)
- More VA programs.
- Legalize meth and decriminalize drug use. Test city - a step into solution.
- Corvallis has a good blueprint to end homelessness. Fund the Ten Year Plan.

Community Involvement/Awareness

- Greater direct community involvement/interest. A lot of nice people, but many stereotypes. Ex. Student preferences even over families. Helping families. Churches helping families.
- OPEN HEARTS and minds to deal with traumatized people. Compassion.
- Target poverty, welfare and people that need support.
- Studying the problem.

Other

- We will never end homelessness.
- No idea (2 responses)
- Funds to help with ID