

Building Community and Driving Action: Working to Address Homelessness & Housing Instability in Benton County Through Coalitions

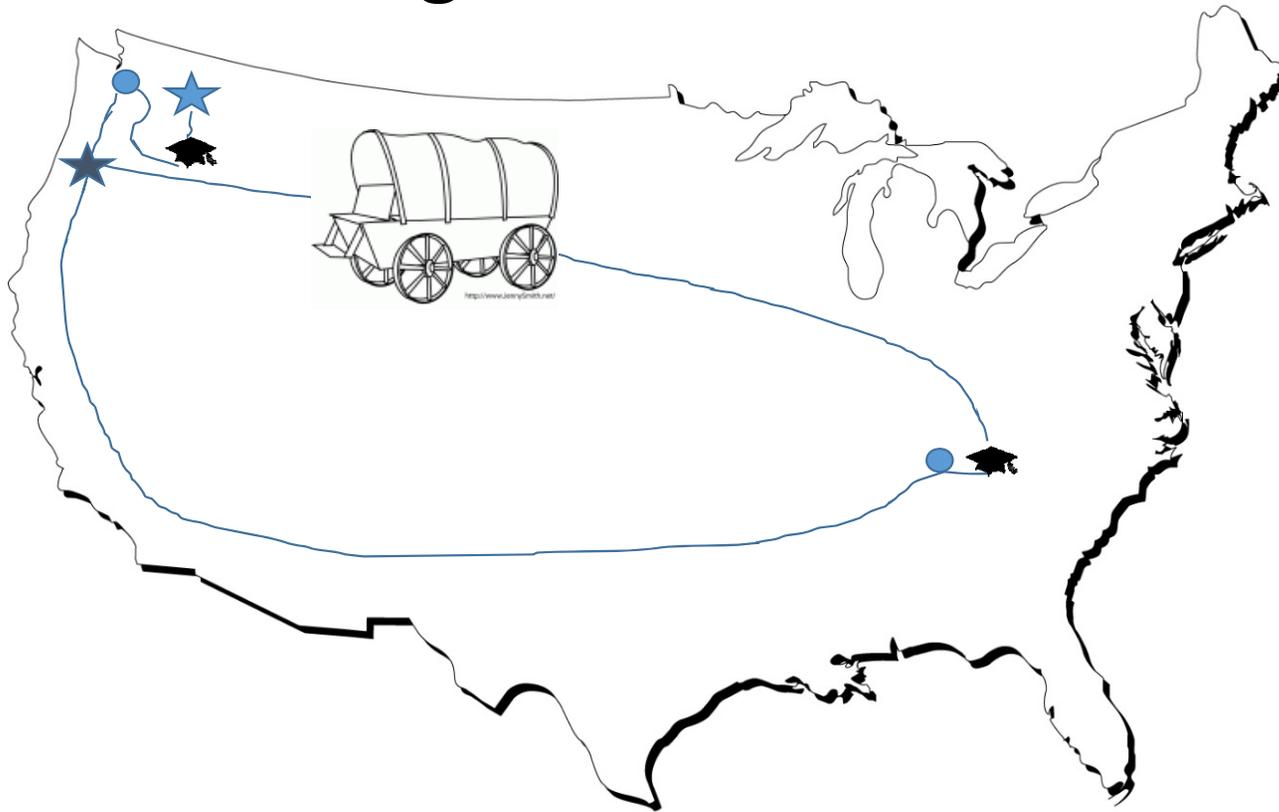
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Program Manager

Housing Opportunities Action Council

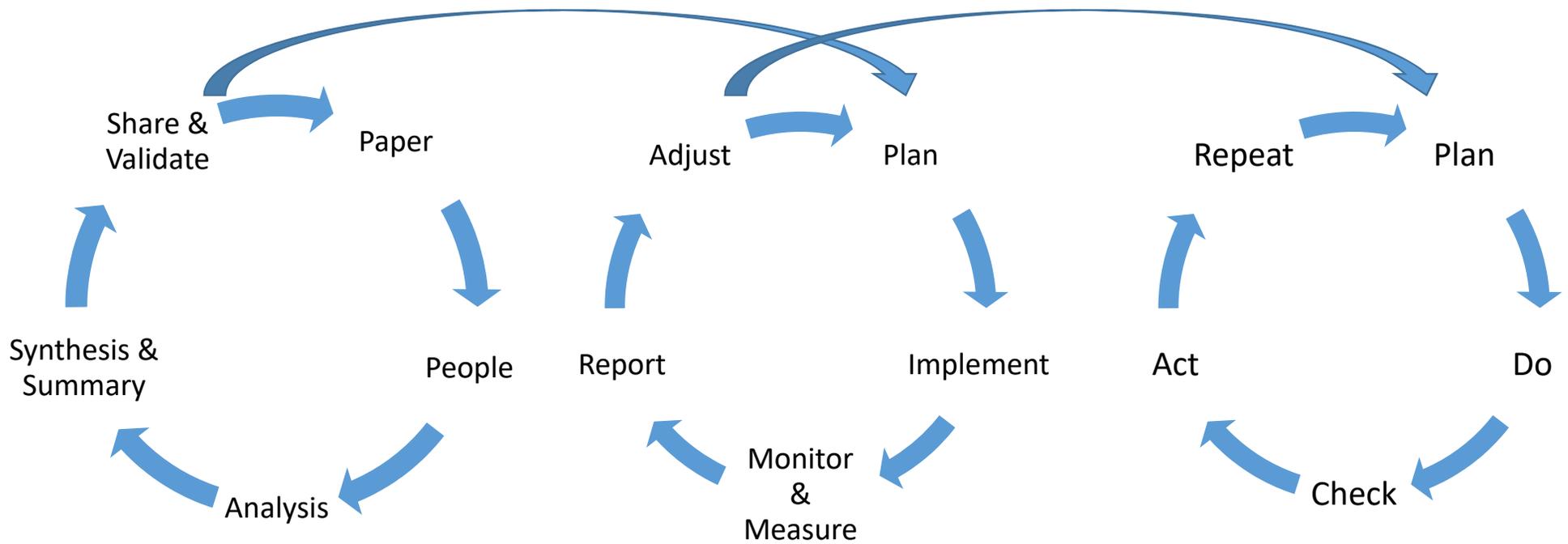
United Way of Benton & Lincoln Counties

My personal Oregon Trail...



7,000 miles to go 400...

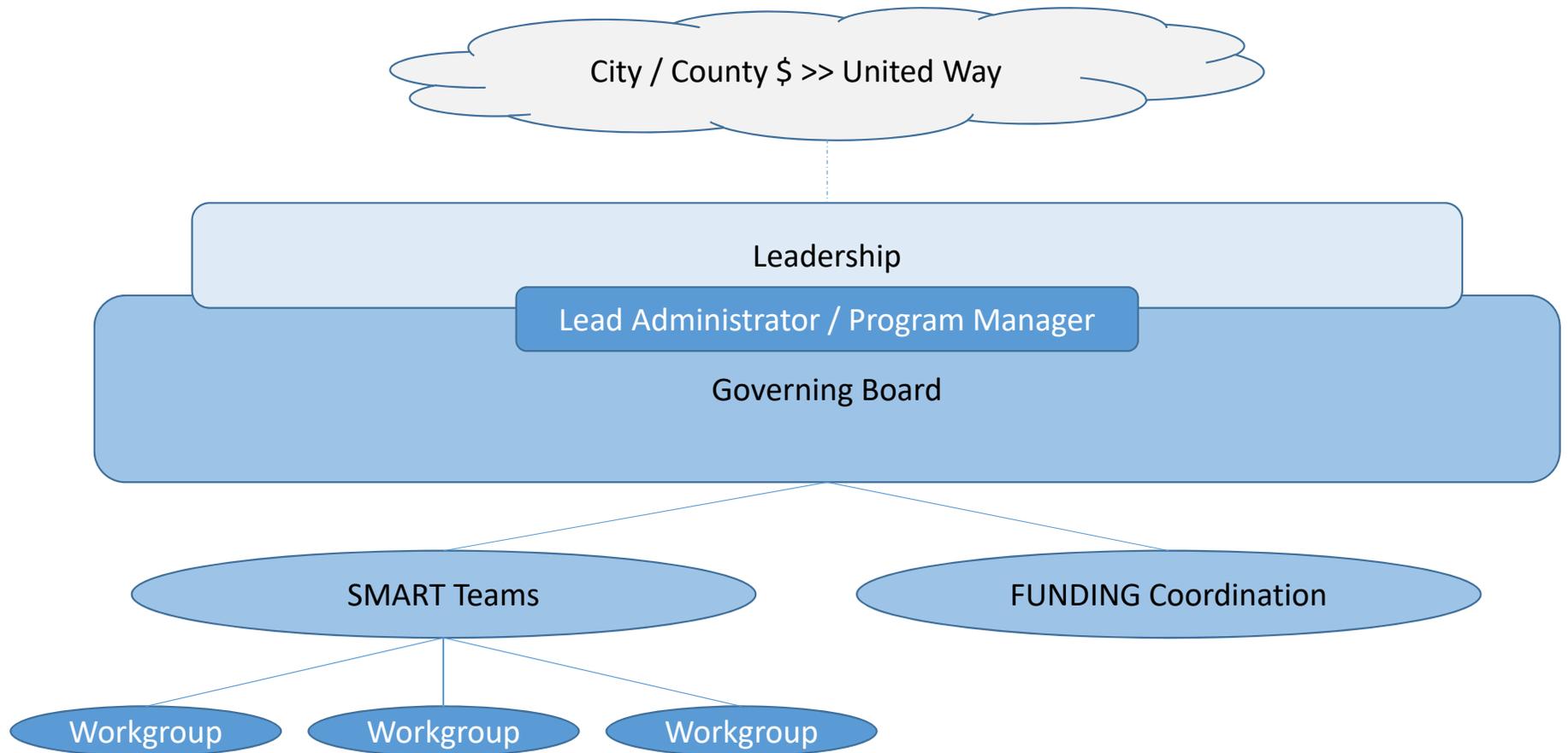
Engagement Approach



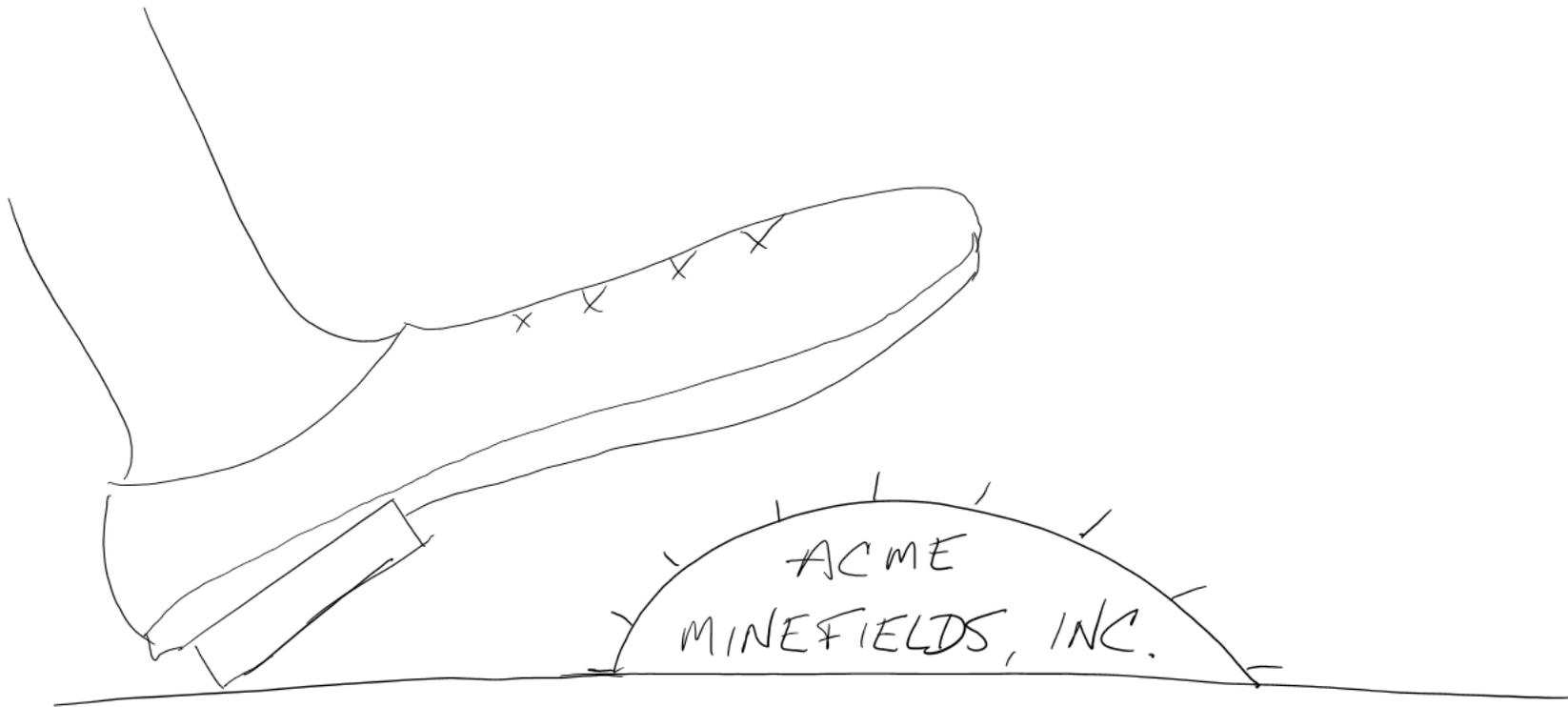
Housing Opportunities Action Council

- Government, social service agencies, faith community, and other non-profits focused on affordable housing and homelessness in Corvallis and Benton County
 - Roots in “Homeless Oversight Committee” formed in 2009 to guide implementation of Ten Year Plan. Renamed and refocused in 2016 to address broader spectrum of housing needs, but HOAC efforts still aligned to the “Ten Year Plan” to address issues of housing and homelessness.
 - Governing Board / Leadership Committee / Standing & Ad Hoc Committee structure
 - Forming/Storming/Norming/Performing – HOAC still in “Storming/Norming” stage of org development.
 - Still developing sense of purpose, and ability to drive toward common goals
- Program Manager role = Administrative backbone
 - Facilitate transparent communication, community engagement, strategic planning and program management, and setting of shared goals and metrics
 - United Way sought out to provide backbone role based on “systems level” approach and experience

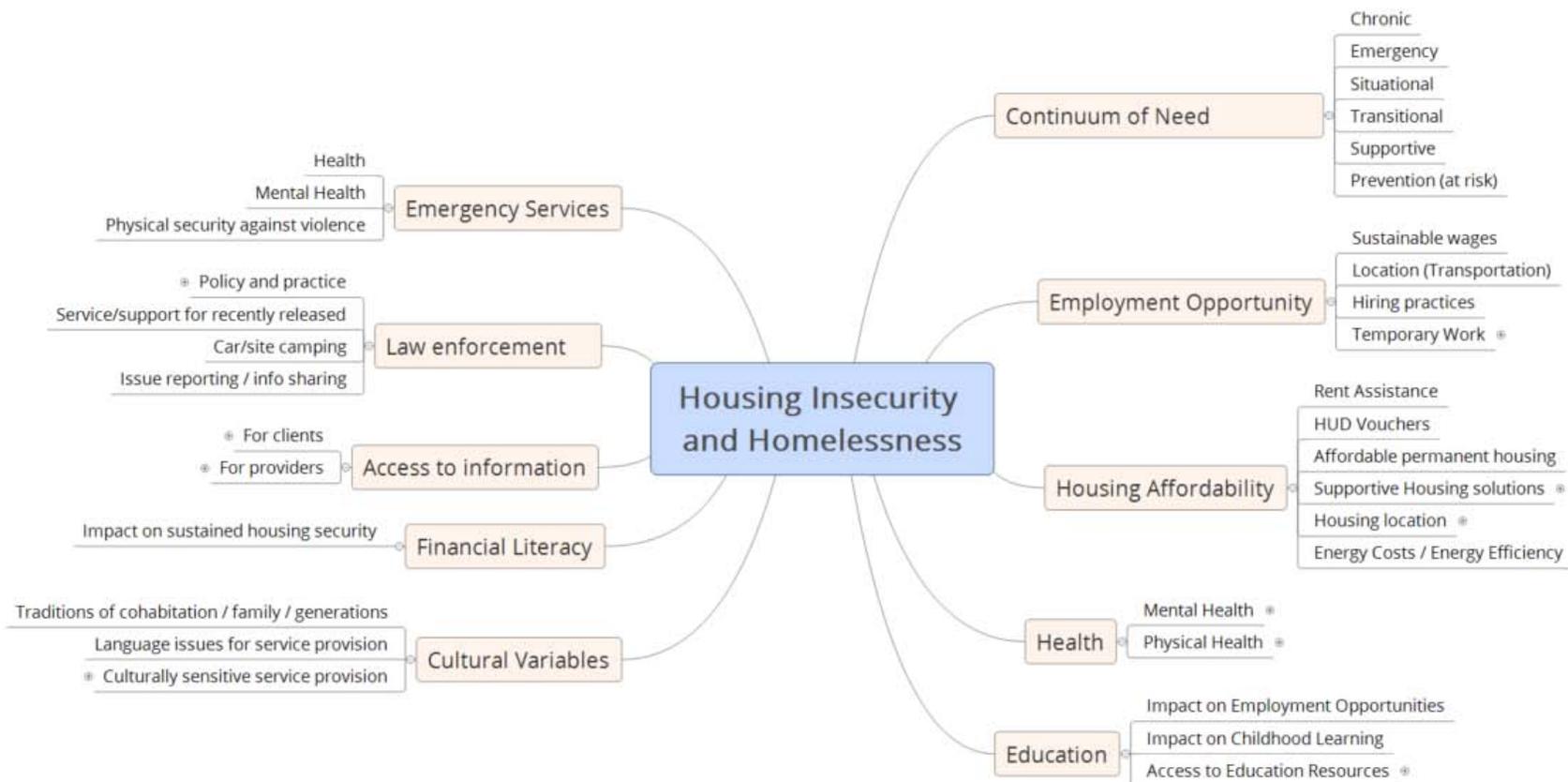
HOAC Structure: opportunities & challenges



Why is talking about housing & homelessness so challenging?



Why is this issue hard? Complex web of issues



Add the intersection of organizational charters, non-profit fund raising, national & local politics, personal perspectives and bias...

Why is talking about housing & homelessness so challenging?

- Confirmation Bias and the challenge of “evidence” and “research”
- The power of “fate” / “personal responsibility” / “self-making” as cultural messages
- The emotional/cognitive load of words like “Home”
 - Good or bad, our experience of “home” is a powerful driver of significant personal and social outcomes
 - Sense of Self
 - Moral Sensibilities
 - Expectations of Behavior, Boundaries and Opportunity
 - Educational and Employment prospects

How do you address this challenge?

- Articulate Shared Values and Develop Shared Vocabulary
 - Before diving into the evidence and policy recommendations, talk about values that are shared, and leverage that to show where a policy/practice fails to support shared values
- Use Data and Evidence wisely
 - Be aware that confirmation bias and other biases may undermine your finely tuned data
 - Use “social math” where possible to make numbers concrete
- Use Personal Stories or “composites”
 - Make complex realities tangible, and show how positive outcomes can happen
- Tie personal stories to system-level / policy-level issues that are creating barriers to successfully delivering on shared values
 - “Policy” can be daunting – make it real by showing impacts that matter.
 - Who is hurt or helped?
 - How are they hurt or helped?
- Create safe space for discussion and disagreement

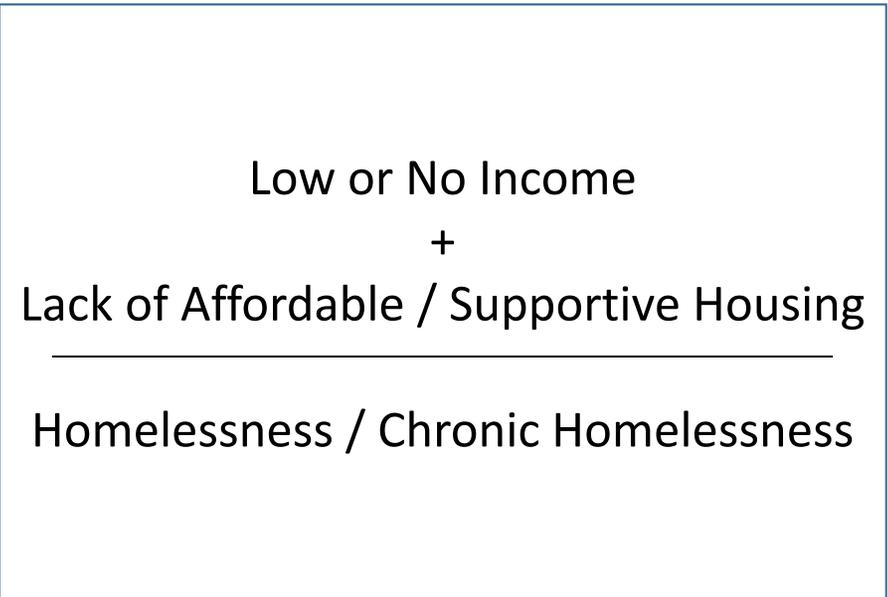
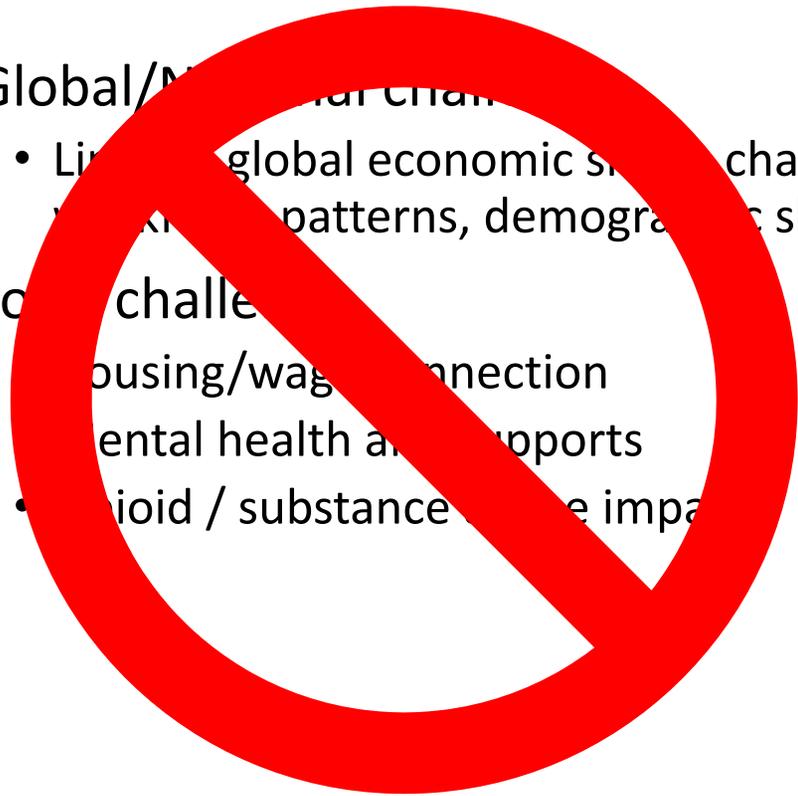
Be the partner others want to work with

- Integrity
- Inclusive
- Seek to Understand/Empathize with multiple perspectives
- Search for shared values that support needed actions

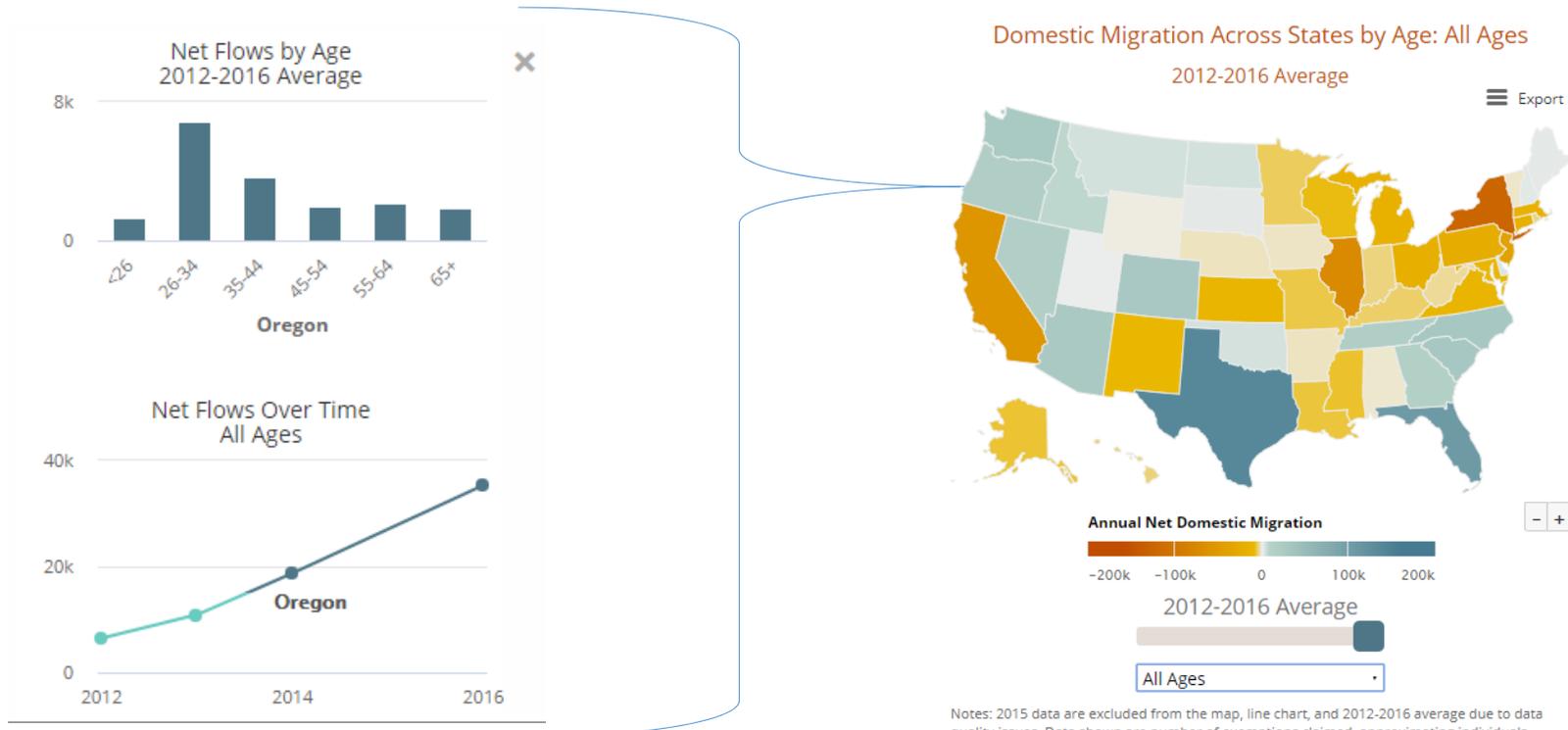
Trusted Partners are critical
especially when dealing with sensitive/loaded issues

What's causing homelessness in the US?

- Global/Macroeconomic challenges
 - Living through global economic shifts, challenges of transitioning global economy, changing labor patterns, demographic shifts, cultural shifts in behavior and norms
- Local challenges
 - Housing/wage connection
 - Mental health and supports
 - Covid / substance use impacts

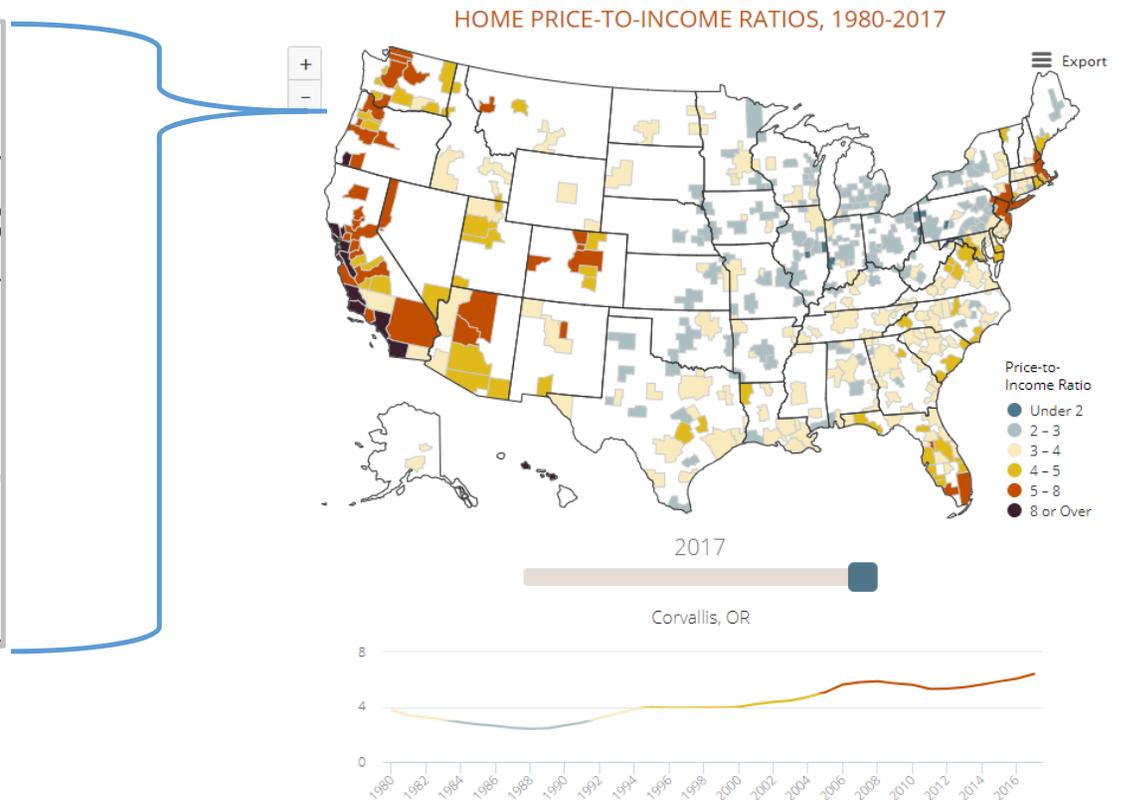
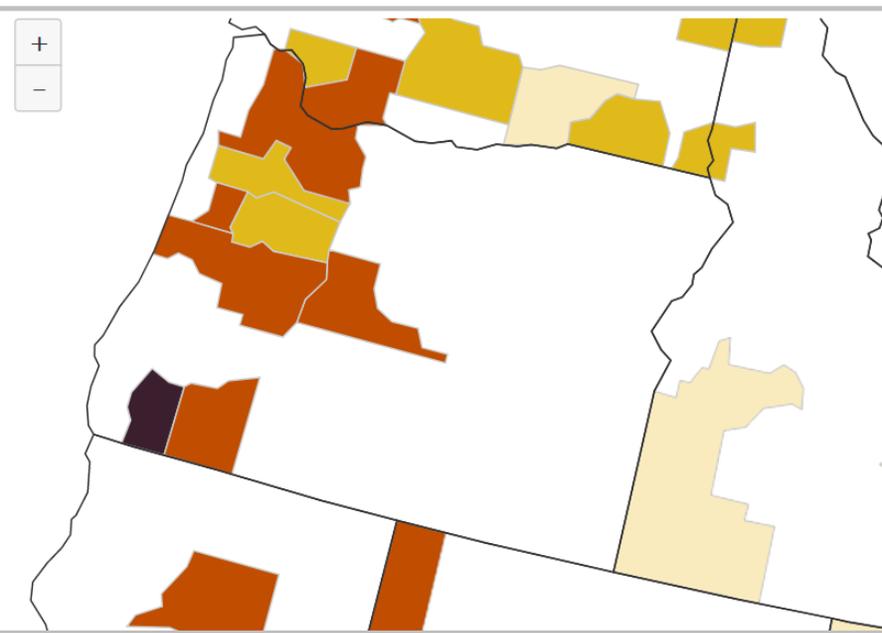


More people moving to the West means increased housing market pressure



Source: <http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/state-nations-housing-2018/?share=graph3>

The housing/income disconnect, according to the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University



Note: Home prices are the median sale price of existing homes and incomes are the median household income within markets.
Source: JCHS tabulations of National Association of Realtors, Metropolitan Median Area Prices, and Moody's Analytics Forecasts.

Source: <http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/price-to-income-ratios-are-nearing-historic-highs/>

Meet your neighbor, ALICE

- Median income for single mother in Benton County: \$25K/yr*

\$ 25,000 - income

- 10,700 - median annual rental cost
- 12,300 - average childcare cost for 2

\$ 2,000 / Year left for balance of expenses

\$167 month available for food, healthcare, transportation, taxes

*NOTE: \$25K median income is above Federal Poverty Level, but below “survival” budget in Benton County.

	Single Adult	2 Adults, 1 Infant, 1 Preschooler
Housing	\$530	\$838
Child Care	\$0	\$1,260
Food	\$177	\$586
Transportation	\$346	\$692
Health Care	\$196	\$728
Technology	\$55	\$75
Miscellaneous	\$162	\$499
Taxes	\$319	\$816
Monthly Total	\$1,785	\$5,494
ANNUAL TOTAL	\$21,420	\$65,928
Hourly Wage	\$10.71	\$32.96

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Internal Revenue Service; Tax Foundation; and Oregon Department of Human Services, 2016.

What does it cost to afford the basic necessities?

The Household Survival Budget gives the cost of housing, child care, food, transportation, and health care at a bare-minimum “survival” level. It does not include any savings, leaving households without a cushion for unexpected expenses and unable to invest in the future.

Sources: Children First for Oregon
2016 County Data Book, PNW ALICE report,
Benton County Health Department

What Do We Know?

There is a spectrum of need

- Solutions and needed services vary across the spectrum of need.



While the chronically homeless and provision of basic shelter draws much of the spotlight, there is a continuum of need that our community needs to address.

Homelessness & Poverty in Benton County



~100/night in crisis



~30,000/night struggle in ALICE households

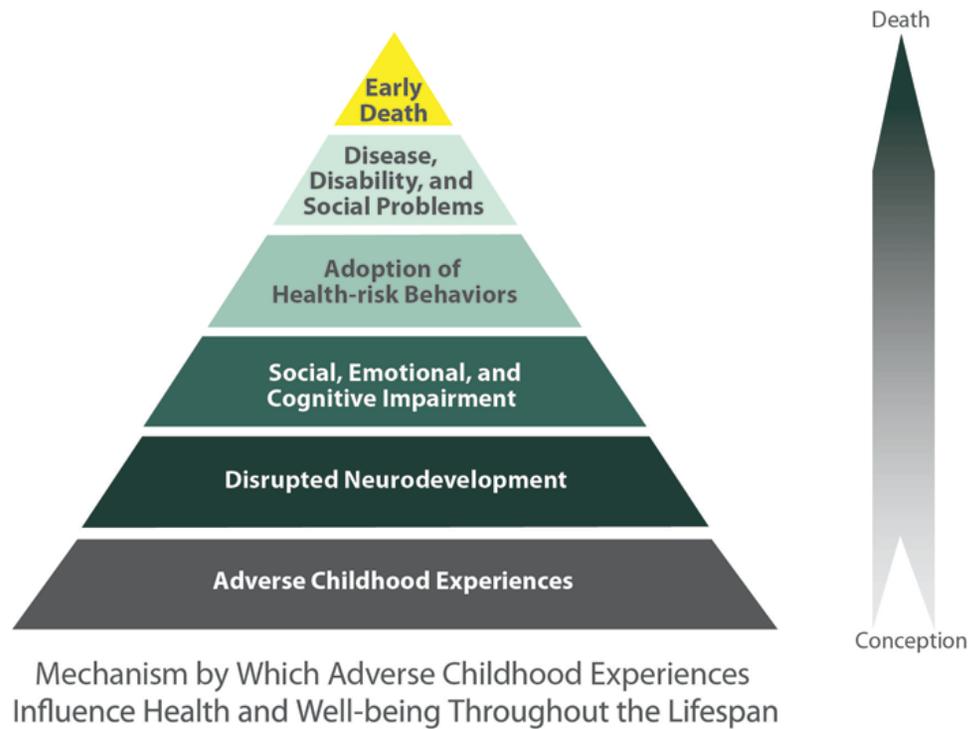


<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/71/ReserStadium2012.jpg>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_bus#/media/File:ICCE_First_Student_Wallkill_School_Bus.jpg

See <https://www.unitedwayalice.org/oregon>

ACEs can beget ACEs...



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC-Kaiser ACE study

What Do We Know?

What happens to the parents, happens to the kids...

- ***Children in these situations are sick more often, live with more hunger, and don't do as well in school, with lifetime impacts to their education and income potential.***
- Housing instability drives increased health-risks and accidental injury or death, as well as an increase in food insecurity, which has a well documented set of health and achievement impacts on youth, adults and seniors. (Benton County Health study)
- Children experiencing housing instability have weaker vocabulary and problem solving skills, increased behavioral problems, and lower academic achievement – as youth and as adults. (2013 Urban Institute study)
- Low educational achievement is directly related to low income potential, driving the cycle of poverty from generation to generation.
 - **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have a lasting impact!**

What do you think?

- Involvement in community conversation
- Points to provide input
- Missing perspectives

SOURCES

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- Enterprise Health in Housing Report: <http://bentonhoac.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Health-in-Housing-Study-Enterprise-Core-Full-Report-FINAL.pdf>
- The Negative Effects of Instability on Child Development: A Research Synthesis, Urban Institute, 2013: <http://www.urban.org/research/publication/negative-effects-instability-child-development-research-synthesis>
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- Ten-Year Plan to address homelessness in Benton County: <http://bentonhoac.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/benton-county-10-year-plan.pdf>
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- Imagine Corvallis 2040: <http://www.corvallisoregon.gov/index.aspx?page=1843>
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html>
- There Doesn't go the Neighborhood, Trulia, 2016, <https://www.trulia.com/blog/trends/low-income-housing/>
- Does federally subsidized rental housing depress neighborhood property values? March 9, 2007, Journal of Policy and Management, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pam.20247/abstract>
- Community is Key in Expanding Housing Opportunity, Jan. 4, 2017, <http://spotlightonpoverty.org/spotlight-exclusives/community-key-expanding-housing-opportunity/>
- Incredible Edible: <https://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/>

For more information

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