



IMPACT NW

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

SINCE 1966

Homelessness
Prevention
Strategy
2022



CONTENTS

Current situation	SLIDE 3
Our values and beliefs	SLIDE 4
Our definition of housing	SLIDE 5
Our Manifesto	SLIDE 6
Near-term homelessness solutions	SLIDE 7-8
Long-term homelessness solutions	SLIDE 9
Impact NW's commitment to action	SLIDE 10-11
Acknowledgements	SLIDE 12



CURRENT SITUATION

Homelessness (2022 point in time count)	6,633
-Multnomah County	5,228
-Clackamas County	597
-Washington County	808
Increase since 2019	30%
Housing insecure households	125,000
Downstream cost	\$1.2 billion



OUR VALUES AND BELIEFS

The values and beliefs that we hold inform our approach to this work. Here are the driving values and beliefs that we hold as an organization specific to our work in ending the homelessness crisis. We believe that:

- Housing is a human right. Everyone deserves to live safely
- Services alone will not solve the housing crisis. Only services plus system change will
- The dismantling and rebuilding of racist systems is paramount
- A housing-first approach creates the best results, as research shows
- Shelter has a place but should be a secondary solution
- Behavioral health and addiction services are critical but won't solve the issue alone
- Solutions must be trauma-informed and human centered and reflect the desires of the people who are experiencing homeless or housing insecure



WHAT IS HOUSING?



At Impact NW, we define housing as meeting these criteria as defined by the United Nations Office of Human Rights:

1. **Security of tenure:** Housing is not adequate if its occupants do not have a degree of tenure security which guarantees legal protection against forced evictions, harassment and other threats.
2. **Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure:** Housing is not adequate if its occupants do not have safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, energy for cooking, heating, lighting, food storage or refuse disposal.
3. **Affordability:** Housing is not adequate if its cost threatens or compromises the occupants' enjoyment of other human rights.
4. **Habitability:** Housing is not adequate if it does not guarantee physical safety or provide adequate space, as well as protection against the cold, damp, heat, rain, wind, other threats to health and structural hazards.
5. **Accessibility:** Housing is not adequate if the specific needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups are not taken into account.
6. **Location:** Housing is not adequate if it is cut off from employment opportunities, health-care services, schools, childcare centers and other social facilities, or if located in polluted or dangerous areas.
7. **Cultural adequacy:** Housing is not adequate if it does not respect and take into account the expression of cultural identity.



OUR MANIFESTO

Things must change. Public camping, doubling up or other drastic measures that people must take because of a lack of affordable places to live is a disaster for everyone.

To change things, Impact NW is tackling the core issue that drives the crisis. Drugs? Mental health? We see the driver of the crisis as a lack of affordable housing fueled by systemic poverty and racism. We understand how addiction and behavioral health issues have compounded the problem. But we know the core issue is a housing system that fails our most-vulnerable neighbors.

Services alone won't solve the crisis. But services plus systems change creates a potent solution. Impact NW's vision goes beyond the conventional solutions and rhetoric. We see the beauty in people. We see how a housing-first strategy will work. We offer near-and long-term solutions that give us the best chance for the type of community we want to see – for everyone.



NEAR-TERM SOLUTIONS

Impact NW advocates for the following near-term solutions to the homelessness to improve life for the most people in the shortest amount of time. Our solutions are supportive of those proposed by the 3000 Challenge PDX, HereTogether and others:

- 1. Long-term subsidies.** Vouchers and other means of subsidizing housing costs are effective ways to help people secure and maintain housing. We need more from all sectors of government.
- 2. Access empty apartments.** Use rent support, landlord coordination and wraparound services to quickly move people into existing, vacant units.
- 3. Purchase properties.** Motels and other properties are available now that provide move-in or nearly-move-in housing units.
- 4. Homelessness prevention.** Work upstream to provide resources and support to people at risk of losing their housing.
- 5. Support autonomous villages and camp sites.** Provide case management, safety, sanitation and trash service. Ensure that encampments meet the principles established by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (May 2021).
- 6. Low barrier shelters.** Ensure for shelters that provide maximum flexibility and livability for people for whom this option is the best fit.



COMPARING COSTS

Cost per year

\$30,000.00

\$25,000.00

\$20,000.00

\$15,000.00

\$10,000.00

\$5,000.00

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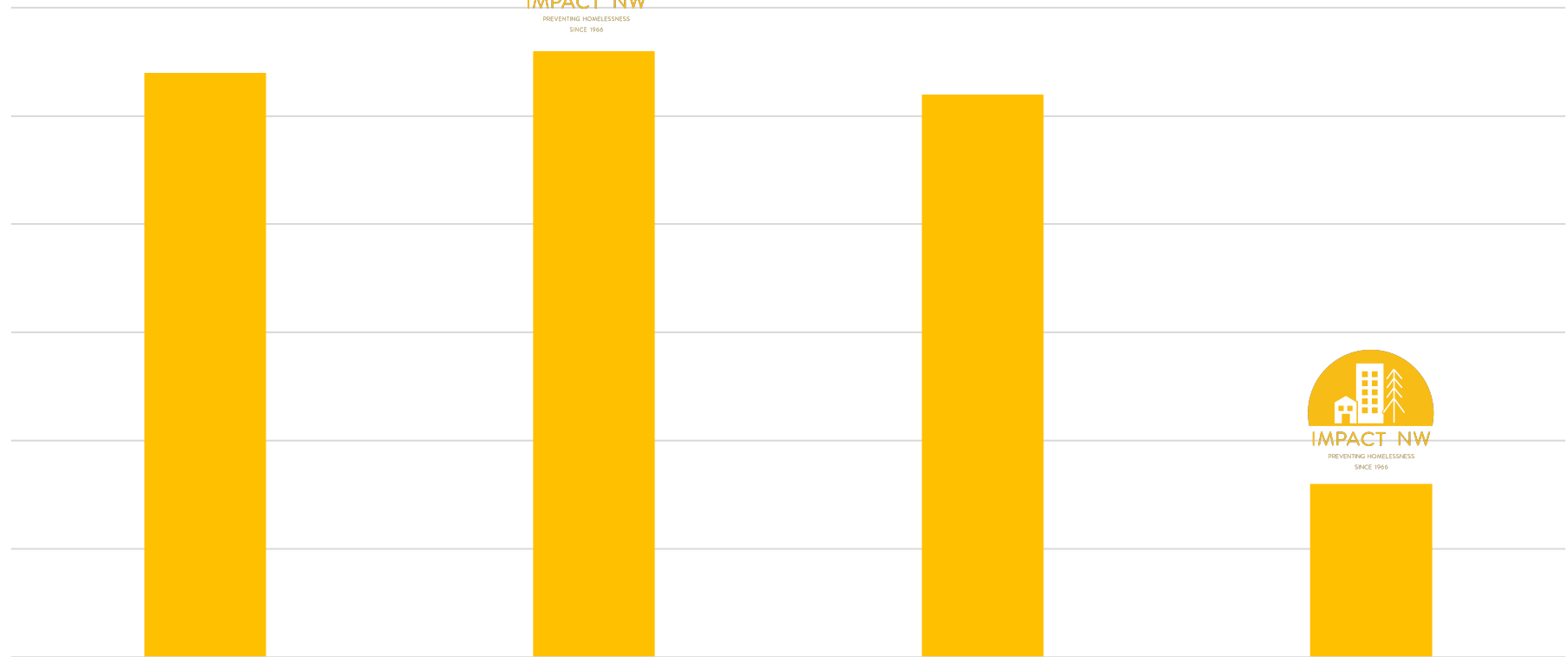


Shelter

Perm. Supp.
Housing

Safe rest village

Rapid rehousing





LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

Impact NW advocates for the following long-term solutions to our homelessness crisis:

1. **More affordable housing units.** Make them accessible for the range of people who are homeless, including chronically-homeless, and ensure screening doesn't further racial disparities.
2. **Increase education and advocacy** to create law, policy and practice that expands dramatically the number of housing units available in the public commons.
3. **Shift focus from emergency services to homelessness prevention** by helping people navigate financial and other challenges, so they don't lose housing in the first place.
4. **Increase supportive services**—from behavioral health and substance use treatment to employment and educational supports to childcare and transportation to direct cash transfers—so that people will remain housed.
5. **Work upstream** so people at risk of homelessness build experiences, skills and assets that help them realize their goals, especially children.
6. **Ground policy decisions in accurate, real-time data,** and sound evidence, so that we are making the best use of the resources we have.



OUR COMMITMENT TO ACTION

Impact NW commits to take on specific near- and long-term actions, in partnership with our community, that will help to end our homelessness crisis. Here are our commitments:

NEAR-TERM COMMITMENTS:

- 1. Support efforts to access empty apartments.** Provide rent support, landlord coordination and wraparound services to quickly move people into existing, vacant units.
- 2. Homelessness prevention.** Work upstream to stem the inflow of people who are losing their housing in the region's challenging housing market. Help support people at risk of losing their housing through services that stabilize and strengthen.



OUR COMMITMENT TO ACTION

LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS:

1. **Increase education and advocacy** to create law, policy and practice that expands dramatically the number of housing units available in the public commons.
2. **Focus on homelessness prevention** by helping people navigate financial and other challenges, so they don't lose housing in the first place.
3. **Increase supportive services**—from mental health and substance use treatment to employment and educational supports to childcare and transportation to direct cash transfers—so that people will remain housed.
4. **Work upstream** so people at risk of homelessness build experiences, skills and assets that help them realize their goals, especially children.
5. **Ground policy decisions in accurate, real-time data**, and sound evidence, so that we are making the best use of the resources we have.



OUR INSPIRATION

Impact NW's Homelessness Prevention Plan has many inspirations, most of all the people we walk alongside everyday as we work to prevent homelessness. In addition, we'd like to recognize the inspiration of:

- 3000 Challenge PDX
- HereTogether
- Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative, Portland State University
- U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness
- *Homelessness is a Housing Problem* – Coburn & Alderen (University of California Press)