



Congressional District Housing Profile

Oregon 2nd & 5th Districts

National Low Income Housing Coalition



DISTRICT-LEVEL RENTER STATISTICS

	Total Renter Households	Severely Burdened Households*	% with Severe Burden		Affordable and Available Rental Units Per 100 Households	Surplus/ (Deficit) of Affordable and Available Rental Units
Income at or below 30% of AMI	20,943	14,943	71%	Income at or below 30% of AMI	29	-14,793
Income between 31% and 50% of AMI	17,336	5,596	32%	Income at or below 50% of AMI	54	-17,439
Income between 51% and 80% of AMI	19,171	1,419	7%	Income at or below 80% of AMI	88	-6,673
All Renter Households	91,991	22,222	24%			

Renters make up 33% of all households in the District

Source: 2016-2020 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data

STATE-LEVEL RENTER STATISTICS

	Total Renter Households	Severely Burdened Households*	% with Severe Burden		Affordable and Available Rental Units Per 100 Households	Surplus/ (Deficit) of Affordable and Available Rental Units
Income at or below 30%** of AMI	138,104	107,155	78%	Income at or below 30%** of AMI	26	-102,760
Income between 31%** and 50% of AMI	101,568	43,607	43%	Income at or below 50% of AMI	44	-135,130
Income between 51% and 80% of AMI	142,249	12,792	9%	Income at or below 80% of AMI	89	-43,611
All Renter Households	641,357	166,609	26%			

Renters make up 37% of all households in the state

Source: 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)

REGIONAL RENTAL AFFORDABILITY STATISTICS

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) and Counties in Districts	Total Renter Households	AMI	30% of AMI	Rent Affordable at 30% of AMI	One Bdrm Fair Market Rent	One Bdrm Housing Wage	Two Bdrm Fair Market Rent	Two Bdrm Housing Wage	Hours at Minimum Wage for Two Bdrm	Avg Renter Wage
Medford MSA	31,425	\$87,800	\$26,340	\$659	\$1,062	\$20.42	\$1,396	\$26.85	73	\$17.50
Bend-Redmond MSA	24,660	\$105,100	\$31,530	\$788	\$1,283	\$24.67	\$1,623	\$31.21	85	\$21.16
Douglas County	13,161	\$73,300	\$21,990	\$550	\$847	\$16.29	\$1,116	\$21.46	63	\$18.05
Grants Pass MSA	10,645	\$76,000	\$22,800	\$570	\$1,024	\$19.69	\$1,346	\$25.88	70	\$15.17
Klamath County	9,291	\$75,200	\$22,560	\$564	\$786	\$15.12	\$1,033	\$19.87	58	\$15.38
Umatilla County	9,175	\$97,100	\$29,130	\$728	\$812	\$15.62	\$1,057	\$20.33	59	\$15.24
Malheur County	4,124	\$65,800	\$19,740	\$494	\$740	\$14.23	\$938	\$18.04	53	\$16.31

Source: Out of Reach 2024. This congressional district includes at least a portion of the Fair Market Rent (FMR) areas listed above. For FMR areas that span more than one state, the data reflect this state's geography. For districts covering more than seven FMR areas, only the seven largest are shown.

*Severely cost-burdened households spend more than 50% of income on housing costs, including utilities. **Or poverty guideline, if higher. AMI = Area Median Income. Last updated in May 2024. Please Contact NLIHC research staff at research@nlihc.org or (202) 662-1530 for additional information.

DISTRICT-LEVEL RENTER STATISTICS

	Total Renter Households	Severely Burdened Households*	% with Severe Burden		Affordable and Available Rental Units Per 100 Households	Surplus/ (Deficit) of Affordable and Available Rental Units
Income at or below 30% of AMI	16,244	13,158	81%	Income at or below 30% of AMI	18	-13,286
Income between 31% and 50% of AMI	15,229	6,066	40%	Income at or below 50% of AMI	41	-18,662
Income between 51% and 80% of AMI	19,967	1,845	9%	Income at or below 80% of AMI	84	-8,353
All Renter Households	86,573	21,410	25%			

Renters make up 32% of all households in the District

Source: 2016-2020 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data

STATE-LEVEL RENTER STATISTICS

	Total Renter Households	Severely Burdened Households*	% with Severe Burden		Affordable and Available Rental Units Per 100 Households	Surplus/ (Deficit) of Affordable and Available Rental Units
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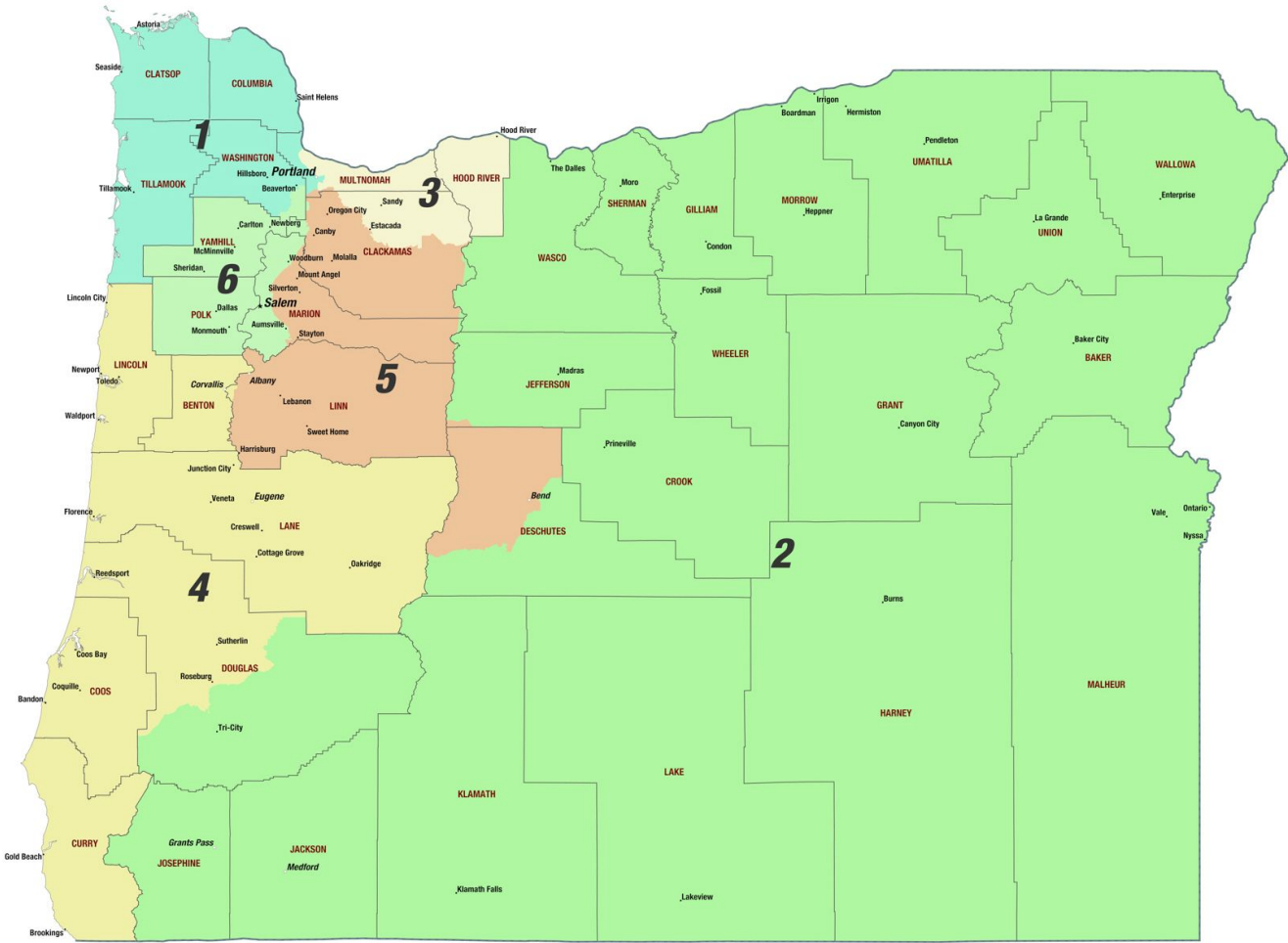
Source: 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)

REGIONAL RENTAL AFFORDABILITY STATISTICS

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) and Counties in Districts	Total Renter Households	AMI	30% of AMI	Rent Affordable at 30% of AMI	One Bdrm Fair Market Rent	One Bdrm Housing Wage	Two Bdrm Fair Market Rent	Two Bdrm Housing Wage	Hours at Minimum Wage for Two Bdrm	Avg Renter Wage
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro MSA	309,284	\$116,900	\$35,070	\$877	\$1,776	\$34.15	\$2,024	\$38.92	98	\$25.58
Salem MSA	58,447	\$91,300	\$27,390	\$685	\$1,053	\$20.25	\$1,340	\$25.77	70	\$17.23
Bend-Redmond MSA	24,660	\$105,100	\$31,530	\$788	\$1,283	\$24.67	\$1,623	\$31.21	85	\$21.16
Albany MSA	16,499	\$84,900	\$25,470	\$637	\$1,121	\$21.56	\$1,384	\$26.62	72	\$17.72
Jefferson County	2,564	\$81,000	\$24,300	\$608	\$843	\$16.21	\$1,093	\$21.02	61	\$17.89

Source: Out of Reach 2024. This congressional district includes at least a portion of the Fair Market Rent (FMR) areas listed above. For FMR areas that span more than one state, the data reflect this state's geography. For districts covering more than seven FMR areas, only the seven largest are shown.

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OREGON CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS 119TH CONGRESS



Finding & Recommendations
of the Task Force on Homelessness &
Racial Disparities in Oregon
pgs. 15-34





Concerns About Changing the System

Interviewees had different concerns depending on which power group they belong to. Those with historically funded institutions feared a loss in their funding as well as a loss in funding across all geographic areas. Other interviewees identified these historically funded institutions as being resistant to change, as well as skepticism that changing the funding structure would destabilize these institutions. These interviewees also expressed concern that the power dynamics in the state will not let real change happen.

Interviewees broadly identified the difficulties of implementing “real change,” noting that change will require time, resources, the inclusion of missing voices, alignment on what racial equity means, operationalizing equity values into measurable outcomes, developing consequences, and balancing urgency alongside spaciousness to create thoughtful solutions. One interviewee expressed concern that if the Task Force work is unsuccessful, this will be used as a scapegoat for resistance to future equity efforts.

DATA FINDINGS

The Discovery Team collected and analyzed data on the demographics of people experiencing homelessness across the state, system performance metrics across Continua of Care (CoCs), research on the disparate harm of other public systems on communities of color, and current and historic funding for homeless service provision. The findings outlined below show a disproportionate impact of homelessness on Black, American Indian and Alaskan Native, and Hispanic and Latinx communities across the state, but few structural or systemic tools actively addressing racial inequity statewide.

Race and Ethnicity of Those Experiencing Homelessness

4x American Indian/Alaska Native Oregonians are represented in homelessness more than four times their share of the total state population

Table 2 shows racial and ethnic disparities among people experiencing homelessness by comparing the characteristics of total population, population experiencing poverty, and population experiencing homelessness. Homeless population and subpopulation data comes from the 2020 Point-In-Time (PIT) Count data reported in the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to the U.S. Congress. PIT Counts serve as an unduplicated, one-night estimate of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness, typically conducted annually at the end of January. Although PIT Count methodologies are widely seen as an undercount of those experiencing homelessness, the use of the methodology across communities provides one statewide metric of homelessness. Because communities’ ability to conduct PIT counts in 2021 were impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic, the extent of the pandemic’s impact on homelessness in the state is still emerging. Data on the total population and population under 100% of the poverty line come from the American Community Survey (ACS) most recent 5-year data.

These data show that in Oregon, people who identify as Black or African American are 2% of the total population, 4% of those in poverty, and 6% of those experiencing homelessness. In other words, the percentage of Black people experiencing homelessness is 3 times their share of the total state population. People who are American Indian or Alaskan Native are overrepresented at an

3x Black Oregonians are represented in homelessness more than three times their share of the total state population

even greater rate of nearly 4 times their share of the general population. People who are American Indian or Alaskan Native are about 1% of the total population, 2% of those in poverty, and 5% of those surveyed by the PIT Count.

Overrepresentation is also seen among Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders, while those who identify as white or Asian are underrepresented.

It is important to note that further disaggregating the data within a pan-ethnic racial identity group (e.g., Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Asian American, or multiracial) is needed to provide a full understanding of racial disparities for specific groups within a larger group. For example, it may be that while Asian/Asian Americans on the whole are under-represented among those experiencing homelessness, sub-groups may actually be over-represented. Further analysis is needed to understand these nuances.

Table 2: Oregon Population, Poverty, and Overall Homelessness by Race and Ethnicity

RACE	TOTAL POPULATION	POVERTY	HOMELESSNESS
White	84.4%	78.8%	81.3%
Black	1.9%	3.7%	5.7%
Asian	4.4%	4.5%	0.8%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.1%	1.9%	4.9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.4%	0.6%	1.1%
Multiracial or Other	7.8%	10.4%	6.2%
ETHNICITY			
Not Hispanic or Latinx	87.0%	80.2%	90.6%
Hispanic or Latinx	13.0%	19.8%	9.4%

Data Source: ACS 2019 5-year Data and 2020 Point-in-Time Count



The PIT Count data shows that 9.4% of those experiencing homelessness were Hispanic or Latinx. When comparing this to the Hispanic or Latinx share of poverty (19.8%), this could be interpreted as underrepresentation among those experiencing homelessness. However, these data may undercount Hispanic or Latinx homelessness. People may avoid services due to lack of knowledge and outreach, language barriers, and fear among those who are undocumented. Homelessness among Hispanic

Table 3: Oregon Sheltered Status and Household Type by Race and Ethnicity

RACE	SHELTERED HOMELESSNESS	UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS	SINGLE ADULTS	FAMILIES
White	79.1%	82.7%	81.6%	80.2%
Black	8.1%	4.2%	5.6%	6.5%
Asian	1.0%	0.6%	0.7%	0.9%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	3.8%	5.5%	4.9%	4.5%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1.4%	1.0%	1.1%	1.5%
Multiracial or Other	6.6%	6.0%	6.2%	6.3%
ETHNICITY				
Not Hispanic or Latinx	89.2%	91.4%	91.8%	84.8%
Hispanic or Latinx	10.8%	8.6%	8.2%	15.2%

Data Source: 2020 Point-in-Time Count

Latinx communities may also be more likely to take the form of doubling up (staying with friends or family to avoid shelter or the streets), often in overcrowded households.¹

Table 3 shows how the race and ethnicity of those surveyed in the 2020 PIT varies across household type and sheltered/unsheltered status. According to the 2020 PIT count, Black people make up a greater proportion of those who experience sheltered

15.2% of Oregonians experiencing homelessness as families identify as Hispanic or Latinx

People who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native  More Likely to Experience Unsheltered Homelessness

homelessness (8.1%) and homelessness within families (6.5%) than unsheltered homelessness (4.2%) and single adults (5.6%) in Oregon. People identified in the 2020 PIT count as American Indian or Alaska Native are more likely to experience unsheltered homelessness than sheltered; they made up 3.8% of those counted in sheltered and 5.5% of those counted in unsheltered locations. Overall, 9.4% of those experiencing homelessness were Hispanic or Latinx, but 15.2% of those experiencing homelessness as families were Hispanic or Latinx.

Funding Data

There are 41 federal funding streams that can be leveraged to directly address homelessness, but Oregon’s funding priorities only reflect homeless services when funding is explicitly or exclusively designed for supporting homeless services. Federal funding structures and allocations perpetuate these disconnects, but statewide efforts to bridge gaps across systems and programs could improve the state’s ability to identify racial disparities and develop processes to pursue racial equity within its social service systems. The state’s recent Medicaid waiver could be leveraged in beginning to build or strengthen such connections. The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness has offered guidance and recommendations to states on how braiding funding can strengthen social safety nets, address long-standing gaps in services, and achieve better and more equitable outcomes across public systems. Collaboration and strategic planning to address housing insecurity and homelessness across state-funded health care, housing, social services (including domestic violence services, child welfare, behavioral health) criminal justice, and labor systems and programs can strengthen state’s capacities to address racial disparities, as all of these systems have played a role in enacting and perpetuating harm against communities of color for the length of the nation’s history and before its formal establishment.

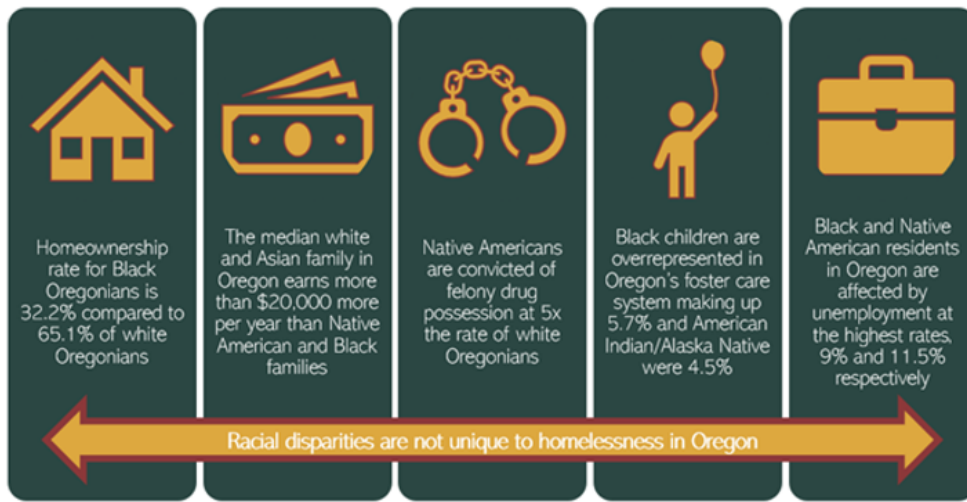
Federal and state funding are often disbursed through a layered network of organizations through subcontracting agreements, which may perpetuate longstanding racial and geographic power dynamics in Oregon. Current funding structures obscure the state’s diversity by funneling funds regionally. This, in turn, establishes regional and statewide gatekeeping mechanisms that eclipse the visibility of communities of color.

Systemic Racism and Inequity Perpetuate Homelessness

Racial inequities across publicly-funded systems in the United States are known to perpetuate homelessness among people of color. While disproportionate rates of poverty are evident in communities of color, systemic racism is also perpetuated through other public systems, exacerbating the impact of poverty on people of color, leading to more disparate rates of homelessness.

¹ Research has shown lower rates of homeless service use by Hispanic or Latinx individuals and families due to lack of linguistically inclusive and culturally responsive programs, misinformation about shelter eligibility for immigrants, and concerns about family separation and interaction with immigration and customs enforcement. (Chinchilla & Gabrielian, 2019; Culhane et al., 2019). A measure of doubled-up homelessness using ACS data finds that rates of Hispanic or Latinx doubled-up homelessness are high, unlike rates of sheltered/unsheltered homelessness (Richard et al., 2022). Based on that measure for Oregon, 24.3% of those experiencing doubled-up homelessness are Hispanic or Latinx (Discovery team analysis of ACS public use microdata). See: Chinchilla, M., & Gabrielian, S.. (2019). Stemming the rise of Latinx homelessness: Lessons from Los Angeles County. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 29(2), 71-75; Culhane, D., Metraux, S., Treglia, D., Lowman, K., & Ortiz-Siberon, A. (2019). Latinx homelessness in Philadelphia: Rates of services use, perceived barriers and assets, and potential opportunities for leveraging city reform efforts to address service gaps. University of Pennsylvania; Richard, M. K., Dworkin, J., Rule, K.G., Farooqui, S., Glendening, Z., & Carlson, S. (2022). Quantifying Doubled-Up Homelessness: Presenting a New Measure Using U.S. Census Microdata. *Housing Policy Debate*, In press.

Data on inequities outside of the homelessness response systems can provide policymakers with greater understanding of the housing, economic, and social conditions that lead to high rates of homelessness among people of color and the barriers individuals and families face when trying to exit homelessness.



Homeownership. In 2019, a state task force reported that Black Oregonians had the lowest rates of homeownership, with 32.2% of households owning a home, compared to 65.1% of white households.²

Income. Racial disparities in household income remain high in Oregon. For example, the median income of both white and Asian households is \$20,000 more per year than Native American or Black households.³

Renter Cost Burden. Households of color in Oregon spend a greater share of their income on rent and are more likely to be housing cost-burdened than white households.⁴ A 2020 survey of Oregon tenants examined renter needs during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. By the summer of 2020, 35% of those surveyed owe back rent, a rate that increased to 56% among people of color.⁵

Wealth. Data on wealth and assets by race are not available at the state level, but Oregon likely mirrors national trends. Across the U.S., racial disparities in wealth are even more stark than income. Black families' median wealth is less than 15 percent that of white families, at \$24,100. Hispanic families' median wealth is \$36,100. Families from other racial/ethnic groups have lower wealth than white families but higher wealth than Black and Hispanic families.⁶

Unemployment. Black and Native American residents are affected by unemployment at the highest rates across all racial and ethnic groups, with rates of unemployment at 9% and 11.5%, respectively, compared to 5.2% of white residents.⁷

Child welfare involvement. Children of color are overrepresented in foster care in Oregon. In 2019 children who identified

2 Oregon Legislative Policy and Research Office. (2019). Joint Task Force Addressing Racial Disparities in Home Ownership: Report on Addressing Barriers to Home Ownership for People of Color in Oregon. Salem, OR: Author. https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/citizen_engagement/Reports/2019-JARDHO-Addressing%20Barriers%20to%20Home%20Ownership%20for%20People%20of%20Color%20in%20Oregon.pdf

3 American Community Survey, 2015-2019

4 Joint Center for Housing Studies, 2017

5 Bates, L. (2020). Stability, Equity, and Dignity: Reporting and Reflecting on Oregon Tenant Experiences During the Covid-19 Pandemic. Portland, OR: Community Alliance of Tenants and Portland State University. <https://www.pdx.edu/homelessness/sites/g/files/znlchr1791/files/2020-09/Renters%20in%20Covid-Oregon%20summer%202020.pdf>

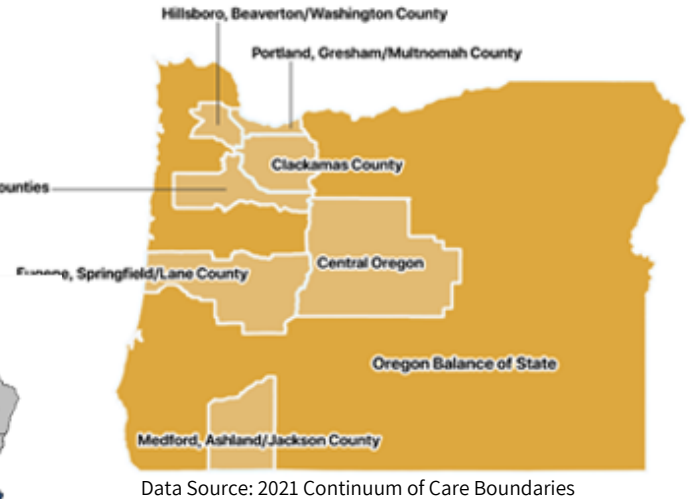
Joint Center for Housing Studies. (2017). Renter Cost Burden by Race and Ethnicity. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University. https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/ARH_2017_cost_burdens_by_race

6 Bhutta et al. (2020). Disparities in Wealth by Race and Ethnicity in the 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances. Washington, D.C.: The Federal Reserve.

<https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/disparities-in-wealth-by-race-and-ethnicity-in-the-2019-survey-of-consumer-finances-20200928.htm>

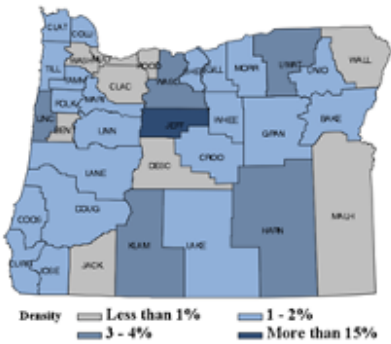
as Black or African American were 5.7% of those in foster care and those who identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native were 4.5%.⁸

Criminal legal system. In Oregon, the total jail population has increased 316% since 1970. Black people constitute 2% of the of the state residents, however 9% of people in jail and prisons. In 2017, Black people were incarcerated in prisons at 3.9 times the rate of white people. Native Americans were incarcerated at 2.1 times the rate of white people. According to a report of 2015 data, Native Americans were convicted of felony drug possession at five times the rate of white Oregonians, the highest of any racial or ethnic group. Black residents were convicted⁹ at a rate more than double the rate of white residents.

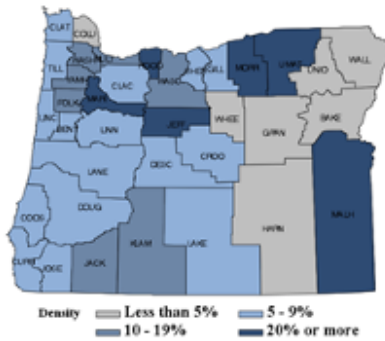


Data Source: 2021 Continuum of Care Boundaries

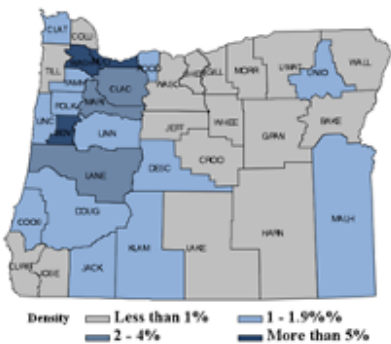
Native American/Alaska Native Population Density



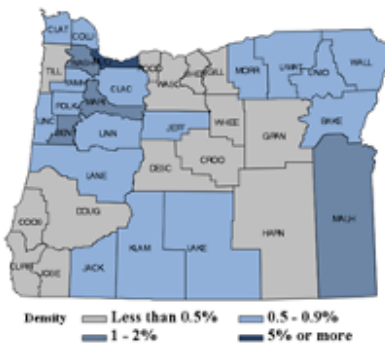
Hispanic Population Density



Asian/Pacific Islander Population Density



African American Population Density



Race, Ethnicity, and System Performance

The Discovery Team was able to obtain Stella P data from each of the 8 Continuums of Care (CoC) within Oregon.¹⁰ The Stella P system or Stella Performance Module uses data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to illustrate how households move through the homeless system and enables analysts to highlight disparities in outcomes.

Though six of the state’s eight CoCs are managed at a county-wide level, the other two CoCs cover unreasonably large portions of the state, which also contain more racially diverse populations. The Oregon Balance of State CoC contains more people experiencing homelessness than the Portland, Gresham/Multnomah County CoC, the state’s largest urban hub. The tri-county CoC of Central Oregon contains some of the state’s larger groups of individuals and families who identify as Hispanic and/or Latinx, Native American, and Alaskan Native. The tri-county region also has more people experiencing homelessness than any of the other CoCs apart from the Balance of State and Portland, Gresham/Multnomah County. Rural counties in Oregon include some of the most diverse across the state, correlating to national data on rural demographics. According to the Brookings Institution, 24% of rural Americans were people of color in 2020.¹¹

Data Source: Racial and Ethnic Impact Statement Historical Data Report
 Note that due to differences in the relative size of racial and ethnic minorities, the scales on each map above are different. Take care when making comparisons across racial/ethnic categories.

7 American Community Survey, 2015-2019
 8 Our Children Oregon. (2021). 2021 Oregon KIDS COUNT Data Cards Release. Portland, OR. <https://ourchildrenoregon.org/2021-kidscount-data-cards-available/>
 9 Vera Institute of Justice (2019). Incarceration Trends in Oregon. : <https://www.vera.org/downloads/pdfdownloads/state-incarceration-trends-oregon.pdf>. Brooklyn, NY.
 Oregon Criminal Justice Commission. (2019). Update to possession of controlled substances report. Criminal Justice Commission: State of Oregon. <https://www.oregon.gov/cjc/CJC%20Document%20Library/2019PCSRReport.pdf>
 10 A Continuum of Care (CoC) is a core network of interconnected programs and services to assist people experiencing homelessness or housing instability
 11 Brookings Institution. (2021). Mapping rural America’s diversity and demographic change. Mapping rural America’s diversity and demographic change (brookings.edu)

Many communities in Oregon that are home to larger groups of Black, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Hispanic or Latinx individuals and families are nested within a broader regional funding structure, making it more difficult to recognize and tailor services to their needs. This is true for the state’s largest concentrations of Hispanic or Latinx people, as well as many of the state’s largest groups of Black and Native American and Alaskan Native people living outside of reservations.



The Discovery Team analysis of Stella P data concluded the following:

- Across all eight CoCs, there is a higher proportion of white, non-Hispanic head of households and adults accessing permanent supportive housing than those who access emergency shelter, transitional housing, and rapid rehousing.
- Each CoC has its own unique disparities that do not mirror characteristics of other CoCs across Oregon.
- Further interrogation of quantitative data coupled with qualitative data and the insights of people with lived experience of homelessness will help each CoC more accurately understand the human experience of individuals and families accessing their systems and create effective strategies to address disparities.

SURVEY FINDINGS

To inform the work of the Task Force, findings from and analysis of the 172 survey responses received are summarized below based on the four goals of the Task Force to identify: (1) methods to decrease racial disparities in homelessness in Oregon, (2) methods to understand and address needs of people experiencing homelessness/housing insecurity in the state, (3) recommendations to change the state’s funding structure, and (4) recommendations to modify contracting processes and eligibility. In addition, data included in the appendices summarize the characteristics of survey respondents and their experience and interest in professional development and training related to racial equity (Appendices A and B).

The purpose of the stakeholder survey was to provide an opportunity for a wide audience (primarily those working in the homelessness response system), to share their understandings of the connections between structural racism and homelessness in their community, how state and local systems can address inequities, and solicit feedback specifically on the statewide funding and contracting processes as part a strategy to advance equity. The results from the survey generate potential strategies for reducing racial disparities in homelessness across the state, with ideas for specific subpopulations and geographies.

Methods to Decrease Disparities

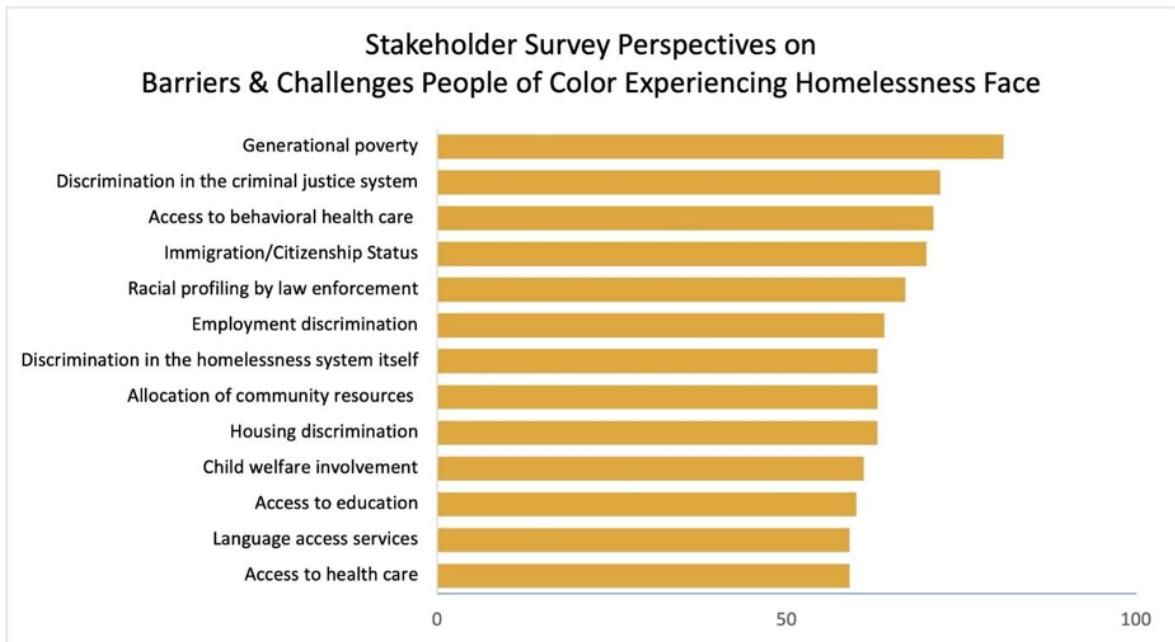
Decreasing disparities in homelessness rates by race and ethnicity requires shared understanding of the causes of those disparities. The survey asked respondents to consider the causes of disproportionate rates of homelessness among people of color in the state. The results of the stakeholder survey reflect existing national research on homelessness, are supported by state data on inequities perpetuated by other public systems as outlined above, and highlight issues especially pertinent to Oregon. Ultimately, responses emphasize the role of systemic racism across time and across intersecting social structures.



First, survey items asked respondents to consider the factors that contribute to disparate rates of homelessness among people of color in the state. Respondents were asked to rate the most significant challenges or barriers that people of color experiencing homelessness in Oregon face, according to a list provided. The following table shows the average rating for each factor. Respondents identified generational poverty as the most severe barrier/challenge, but every factor (from discrimination across employment, criminal justice, and housing, to bias in the service system) was seen, on average, as a significant barrier (a rating higher than 50).

Open-ended comments from survey respondents provide more detail on drivers of racial disparities in homelessness and potential points of intervention. Primary themes across these comments were:

- Historical and ongoing racism and discrimination across society,
- Discrimination specific to the housing market,
- Generational poverty and a lack of opportunities to build wealth, and
- Contemporary service systems that fail to redress harm and adequately meet the needs of people of color, especially Black and American Indian or Alaskan Native people.



Systemic Racism

Answers from respondents about the causes of racial disparities in homelessness point to the underlying racism that has guided, and continues to guide, societal conditions in the state.

Housing Discrimination

Comments from survey participants also describe how the housing choices of people of color, especially Black, American Indian, and Alaskan Native peoples, have been severely restricted by institutional and individual decision-making. Ranging from a historical understanding of explicitly racist policies to the ways in which property owners, real estate agents, banks, and lenders perpetuate racism today, these comments can inform approaches to reduce disparities in homelessness through implementation of strategies to reduce housing discrimination and further fair housing goals.

“ Systemic racism and white supremacy have historically oppressed Black and Native communities in all aspects of their lives, which has led to their socio-economic disempowerment. They are more likely to face homeless[ness] because they are the least institutionally and socially supported groups of people. -Survey Respondent ”



Exclusion from Wealth-Building Opportunities

In addition to emphasizing the role of racism and discrimination in the housing system, respondents connected those policies and practices to generational poverty and lack of generational wealth. Without inherited wealth derived from a family home, for example, too many people of color in Oregon are without the resources to buffer economic distress caused by rising rents and stagnant wages.

“ Institutionalized racism, redlining, little or no access to mortgages/loans due to discriminatory practices, racial zoning ordinances. All of this reinforces segregation and inequities amongst these populations. Without safe and stable housing, a person cannot address the other basic needs of life (food, health, employment, childcare).
- Survey Respondent ”

— “ Oregon has [one of] the highest levels of housing unavailability in the nation, this creates an even larger burden on people of color to get what little amount is available.
- Survey Respondent

— ” Wealth in America is intertwined with home ownership and generational homeownership. Redlining, segregation, [and] income disparity means that people of color are more vulnerable to housing instability.
- Survey Respondent ”

Supply of Affordable Housing

A common concern across responses was the state’s high housing costs, especially in urban and suburban areas. In addition to income disparities putting people of color at greater risk of housing cost burden and inability to pay rent, the competition for scarce affordable rental housing heightens the risk of housing discrimination by race and ethnicity. Comments called for measures to increase the supply of truly affordable housing that is in good condition, in areas connected to employment and social support, and designed for intergenerational families. They also called for rent control policies, stronger government affordable housing assistance, and protections based on source of income.

Cross-system Exclusion and Disparate Treatment

In addition to the ways in which racism and discrimination impact access to housing and access to the economic resources to afford it, respondents emphasized the role other intersecting systems play in increasing risk of homelessness for people of color in Oregon. These factors include employment discrimination, criminal legal system discrimination and subsequent housing barriers, lack of access to quality medical and behavioral health care, and inequitable educational opportunities.

“ Lack of cross-system alignment and collaboration to meet the needs of folks most impacted by multiple systems (such as healthcare, criminal justice, child welfare, etc.), lack of flexible funding to reduce barriers and rapidly stabilize households to prevent entry into homelessness.
-Survey Respondent ”

Experience in the Homeless Service System

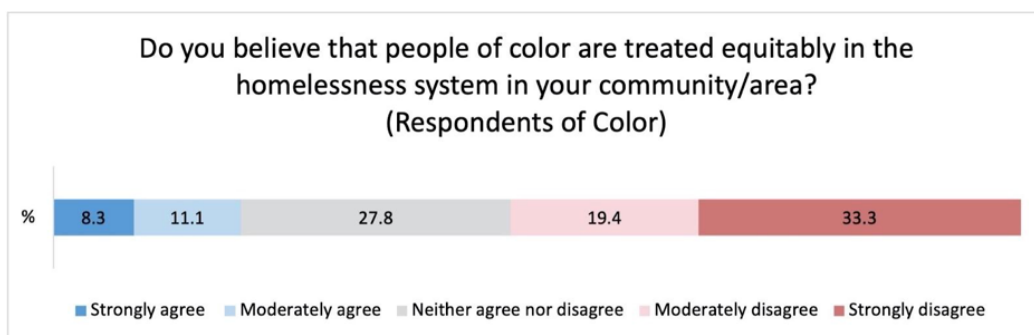
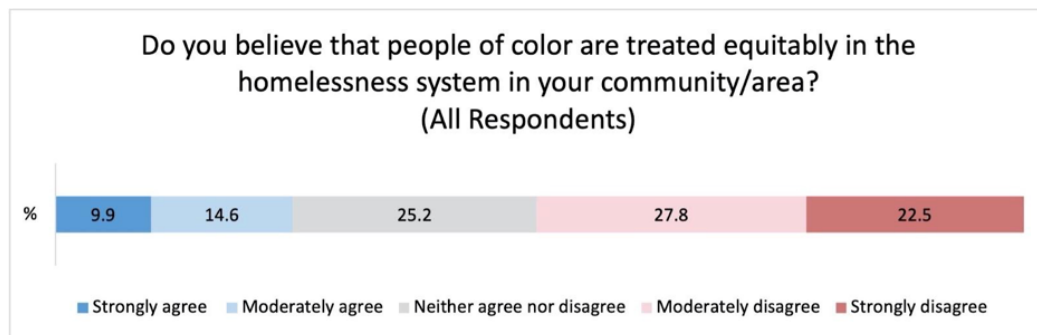
Although respondents identified societal conditions as the primary drivers of homelessness, they also commented on the ways in which the system designed to respond to homelessness and housing insecurity perpetuates inequities. These comments point to potential intervention and change for preventing homelessness for those at risk and helping people of color exit homelessness.

Specific areas for improving the effectiveness of homelessness response are outlined in the next section. However, respondents demonstrate broad critiques and emphasize the importance of addressing racial inequities in service response, not just in the societal conditions that cause homelessness.

“ I've observed a perspective among many people in the social services world that people of color must not be from Oregon, and thus implicitly or explicitly are less deserving of state/local resources. While many unhoused or marginally housed people are indeed from other states, I have not ever seen this standard applied to white people (who in my experience are just as likely if not more so to be from a state other than Oregon).
-Survey Respondent

Identify and Address Needs

The previous section summarized the primary causes of higher rates of homelessness among people of color in Oregon, according to stakeholder survey respondents, and suggestions for points of intervention to prevent homelessness. The second goal of the Task Force is to identify methods to understand and address the needs of people of color experiencing homelessness/housing insecurity in the state to inform the design of the homelessness response system. This section summarizes participant feedback on the system, including assessment, prioritization, and the design of programs (services and housing). It includes concrete program and policy ideas in these areas, as well as recommendations for continuously soliciting feedback from affected communities.



First, participants were asked if they believe people of color are treated equitably in the homelessness system in their community. Approximately half of all respondents disagreed, 25% agreed, and another 25% neither agreed nor disagreed. Looking only at respondents of color (n=36 participants who identified with at least one racial/ethnic identity beyond white), a greater share strongly disagreed (33% versus 22.5%). These results support the importance of advancing racial equity in the homeless service system, especially from the perspective of people of color working within the system. Several people provided comments alongside their choice:



I also think that informal processes of assessment and prioritization are generally inequitable since most service providers are not incorporating racially equitable practices in their frontline service provision or service access protocols.

- Survey Respondent



Providing opportunities for BIPOC individuals to engage in the system should be more of a priority than I view it is currently. Providing multiple access points, more outreach staff engaging individuals where they are at, and providing services to meet their housing needs first is what is needed most.

- Survey Respondent



I think the system is often racist even when the individuals perpetuating that system may not be racist and may be wholly ignorant of the ways they are perpetuating systemic inequalities.

- Survey Respondent



Assessment and Prioritization

The survey asked respondents to comment on how their community's current process of assessment and prioritization for housing and services reduces or contributes to racial and ethnic disparities. Of those who commented based on familiarity and experience with the system, only a few provided examples of ways in which the processes reduce disparities. These included of increased diversity among frontline staff, translation of resources into Spanish, and culturally-specific organizations and targeted outreach.

A greater number of open-ended comments observed ways in which assessment and prioritization contributes to racial disparities. Respondents suggested that the scarcity of housing and service options makes it difficult for the system to provide equitable resources. Within the current context of limited resources, barriers to navigating the system (technology, language, geography, complexity) contribute to disparities in access. Some comments noted that in their communities, coordinated entry access is not always available or consistently implemented. Other comments described factors that contribute to disparities once people are in touch with the system. For example, the content of assessment tools may not adequately identify the housing barriers of non-white populations, and individual providers may be biased in their administration of the assessment and prioritization process.



The current system does not take into account the impact of intergenerational poverty and systemic racism in prioritizing BIPOC communities.

- Survey Respondent



Identifying Homeless Service Needs

Several questions aimed to solicit feedback on what about the current housing and services landscape is working well and what could be improved. Ideas include increased diversity at all levels among those working and leading the system and service agencies, improved pay and benefits, training and professional development, more culturally specific and responsive services, and improved outreach strategies informed by people with lived experience. Themes from open-ended responses included:

- Increase workforce diversity at all levels
- Sustain staff through improved pay, benefits, and caseloads
- Provide anti-racism and cultural competency training and incorporate into supervision and accountability
- More culturally-specific services
- Improved outreach strategies

“

Require that providers actively work towards and make gains in reducing racial disparities in homelessness- and in order to do this, increase fluency in racial equity and build capacity to incorporate racially equitable practices in services and systems.

- Survey Respondent”

“

Focus on culturally specific organizations in a non-tokenist way, if traditional approaches to solving homelessness do not work then alter approaches. For example, if homelessness among a group does not present as a problem in the same way as it does for the majority group, the very definitions of a program may make it more difficult for existing networks to serve those populations. Terms like "homeless" and "literally homeless" are often effectively ways of reinforcing systemic racism.”

- Survey Respondent”

Addressing the Affordable Housing Problem

Within questions aimed to solicit feedback on the current homelessness response system, participants consistently emphasized the importance of tackling the issue of affordable housing to get at “the root of the problem.” These comments include the importance of implementing non-discrimination and fair housing, regulating rent levels, building new housing, and designing affordable housing in different ways. These comments align with those summarized above (Goal 1: Methods to Decrease Disparities). However, one comment could inform the production of site-based affordable housing run by nonprofits: "Offer group housing opportunities, similar to a quad unit, so groups of people can remain together without breaking lease agreements and standards of living, such as, an apartment unit that has four en-suite rooms that connect in the center with a shared kitchen and common space. This could greatly improve mental health as individuals can be housed and still benefit from peer support of cohabitating and "surviving" with the people they trust.”

“

Provide more materials and help in Spanish and other languages.


Provide outreach into the specific communities in need.

- Survey Respondent”

Intersectionality

Respondents were asked to consider what populations were marginalized in conversations about disparities among those experiencing homelessness. People mentioned a variety of identities and experiences whose needs should be understood and addressed. This list should not be seen as a list of who is left behind in every conversation, but a reminder that people of color experiencing homelessness are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, household composition, needs, and housing barriers, and policy and program response should consider targeted needs for:

- American Indian and Alaskan Native communities, including those in urban areas, rural areas, and reservations
- Asian and Pacific Islander communities
- Hispanic individuals and families in rural communities, especially those who migrate



seasonally for work.

- Immigrants, especially those who are undocumented, with language barriers, and arriving as refugees
- Doubled-up households
- LGBTQ populations, especially trans and non-binary individuals outside of urban centers
- People with serious mental illness
- People with visible and invisible disabilities (e.g., chronic illness)
- Parents with adult children with disabilities
- Older adults
- Unaccompanied youth, especially those transitioning out of foster care

Much of the feedback on service and housing needs were aligned specifically with subpopulations. For some of these, we summarize the feedback below (for other groups/identities, not enough information was provided, highlighting the importance of additional work to determine needs).

Immigrant Communities: "The immigrant/undocumented community is concerned about public charge affecting their path to citizenship and language barriers exacerbate the probability of this group not seeking assistance."

American Indian and Alaskan Native Communities: "Native Americans have a well-earned distrust of governmental programs, so when you factor in the challenges of poverty, when they do become homeless, they don't seek public assistance. Tribal services are uneven and often inadequate, and so they have greater difficulty rising out of homelessness."

Black Communities: "For the Black community, I fear that racism still plays a negative role in the way people are treated by their landlords, the court system, and society in general. When they do lose their housing, they face additional barriers to being rehoused simply because of the bias they face from landlords."

“

Leadership and decision makers must include people of color and people who have experienced homelessness. They are the experts, and their input should be valued (and compensated for).

- Survey Respondent

”

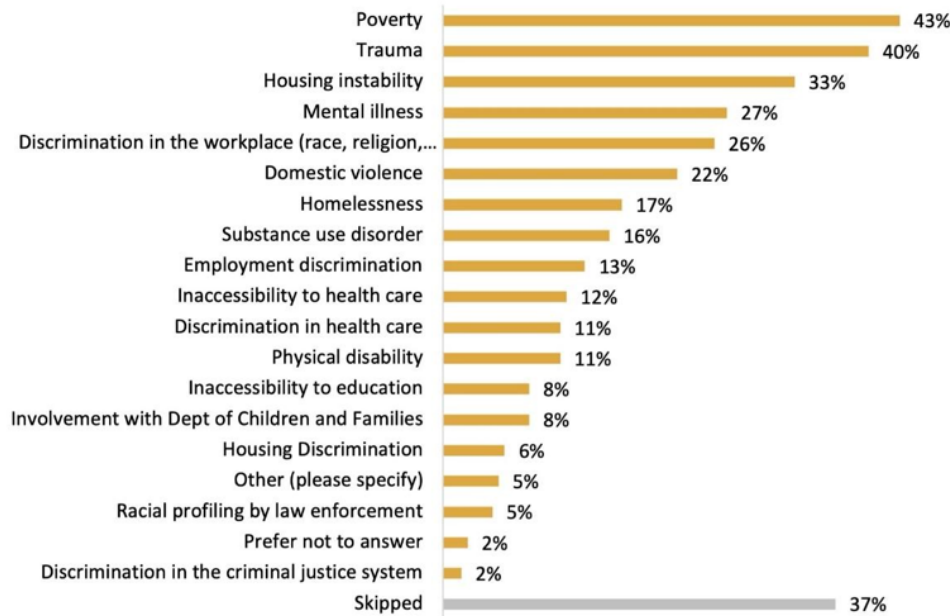
Including and Engaging People with Lived Experience

An additional theme from participants was the importance of engaging people with lived experience of homelessness in all processes to identify needs and implement homelessness response.

To understand how the background of the homelessness and housing workforce in Oregon reflects the people served by the system, the survey asked respondents to indicate their experience with issues often faced by those experiencing homelessness. Poverty and trauma were the most selected experiences among survey respondents. About a third of respondents had experienced housing instability, and 17% had experienced homelessness.

Respondents were also directly asked how people with lived experience of homelessness were included in the decision-making processes for their CoC. Responses were mixed, with many indicating that there was no representation, or none that they were aware of. However, several respondents provided examples of inclusion from their community, such as people with lived experience on staff and recruitment and engagement strategies for boards and committees. Although examples include representation on decision-making boards, others may be limited to advisory boards, where perspectives may or may not be considered by those in power. And although team members with lived experience is vital, there were fewer comments observing people with lived experience in leadership positions.

Respondent Lived Experience (Percentages based on total respondents, n=172)



“ In much of the work I have done throughout the years there are not many BIPOC voices involved in decision making processes. This is often lacking in Oregon.

- Survey Respondent ”

Connecting and Engaging Culturally Specific Organizations

Participants were specifically asked if Community Action Agencies worked to engage local organizations that served historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups. Some observed that CAAs in their communities engage well with local organizations serving marginalized groups, while others observe lack of connection.

In interpreting these comments, it is important to note that intentions are not always aligned with impact. CAAs may be designed with the intention of serving historically marginalized populations, and those leading them may perceive efficacy in reaching marginalized households. However, it is vital to listen to people with lived experience of homelessness from those communities about whether they are aware of services, feel welcome, or have recommendations for improvement.

Ongoing Research and Improved Data Collection

Participants also described the importance of better data collection to best identify current and changing needs. Although data collection is important for system improvement, the many comments uplifting the issue of racial disparities and suggesting concrete ideas to advance equity suggest readiness to engage in racial equity work regardless of issues with the quality of data. One respondent shared how they use their current data to examine equity:

“ I think Community Action Agencies have been engaging local organizations that serve historically marginalized groups pretty well. I also think there is room for improvement but the recent heavy-handed requirements that don't acknowledge the partnerships already built are insulting and generate a message which isn't accurate. OHDC is part of the Community Action network, and they specialize in providing services to farmworkers, who are primarily non-white.

-Survey Respondent ”



Changes to the Funding Structure

Survey respondents were asked to reflect on what is working well about the current state system for funding homelessness services and what they would do to improve the current funding system. Comments came from varied perspectives, and many reported having too little information and understanding to provide feedback on the funding structure.

For those that gave substantive feedback, positive reflections on what was working well in the current system, including coordination of resources, the influx of new resources during the pandemic, and the consistency and stability of non-competitive funding.

Comments containing recommendations for improvements highlighted the needs of rural areas, changes to the allocation process, specific recommendations for program design to serve people of color in Oregon, and ideas to improve upstream homelessness and poverty prevention. Themes included:

- Improved funding for rural areas
- Improved allocation processes
- Funding for homelessness response programs to meet the needs of people of color
- Upstream funds for housing and health care, not just emergency services

Responses to other questions throughout the survey provide insight for funding structure, although some go beyond state funding and pertain to federal funding and priorities for and other sources of funds. A few comments suggest support for expanded eligibility for federal funds to include doubled-up households. There were also comments on the level of funding, some of which can be seen as state responsibility, while supporting the need to advocate for greater funding at the federal level.

Modify Contracting Processes and Eligibility

Respondents were asked how well the state contracting process works for their organization and how they would improve it. Positive feedback was limited, with most responses emphasizing needed improvements or reasons why their agencies or communities have opted out of state funding processes. Common concerns included difficulty navigating the process (technical issues, personnel capacity), slow or delayed receipt of funds, and lack of diversity and inclusion in designing the process. Comments and themes related to contracting included:

Challenging to navigate and complete, especially for small and medium sized communities

Slow or delayed funding

Lack of diversity and inclusion in designing the process

“

I would hire more competent leaders of color to hold policy level changing positions. Stop tokenizing our people of color, provide oversight and frequent audits to make sure the dollars are reaching the targeted populations, increase communications and transparency, increase state participation overall.

- Survey Respondent

”

RECOMMENDATIONS

PRINCIPLES AND SOLUTIONS FRAMEWORK

The Task Force created principles for addressing racial disparity in homelessness across Oregon based on their analysis of the current context, trends, opportunities, and unmet needs, is outlined in the Overview section. The final solutions framework includes seven distinct themes, with specific recommendations to meet the Task Force's four goals:

- Identify and investigate methods by which the state may decrease rates of racial disparity among people experiencing homelessness and receiving services.
- Identify and investigate potential changes in this state's funding structure to address racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity, including consideration of how housing transition of services delivery could be implemented to avoid service disruptions among people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.
- Consider existing methods and recommend additional methods by which the Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) and Oregon Housing Stability Council (OHSC) may receive advice and information about needed services for individuals experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.
- Identify and investigate methods by which the Housing and Community Services Department and Oregon Housing Stability Council may modify contracting process and eligibility for providers of services for individuals experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

The seven themes include:

1. Clarify equity expectations, including key definitions
2. Collaboratively create systemic accountability to reduce racial disparities
3. Collaboratively create a statewide commitment to equity
4. Institutionalize the inclusion of historically minoritized and excluded communities in Oregon
5. Lower barriers to state and federal funding
6. Support and build organizational capacity
7. Uncover barriers to equity

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparities offers 35 recommendations to address the four goals outlined by Oregon's Legislative Assembly. These recommendations prioritize the voices of people of color with lived experience of homelessness as well as the guidance and leadership of communities of color and culturally specific organizations in guiding system-level change across the state's homeless service system. Task Force members hope for the state's partnership in expanding the funding available to prevent and address homelessness in Oregon and offer equity-based strategies for strengthening funding approaches and contracting practices to move the State of Oregon toward greater racial justice.

Note: The recommendations outlined below are not offered in order of priority.



Goal 1: Decrease Disparate Impact of Homelessness on Communities of Color

The Task Force offers the recommendations below as methods by which the state may decrease rates of racial disparity among people experiencing homelessness and receiving services.

- a. Align criteria/model for demographically robust practices across state agencies and funding.
- b. Require that agencies take measurable steps towards prioritizing racial equity and inclusion in their hiring and employee retention practices.
- c. Require that some percentage of changes to funding structure and modifications to contracting, as well as specified goals for decreases in racial disparities in homelessness, directly address the current power imbalance between CBOs and CAAs (especially CSOs).
- d. Align systems that feed into homelessness in a common strategy, solutions, collaboration, and resource sharing (i.e., criminal justice, healthcare, long term care, child welfare, and others) with key performance indicators related to inflow. Recommend a statewide interagency council on homelessness to work in collaboration with the HB 2100 Task Force, as well as economic council involvement and local government coordination.
- e. Work with Governor's Racial Justice Council in shaping equitable outcomes.
- f. Provide support (rental assistance, public housing, other housing resources) in child welfare and criminal justice systems.
- g. Intentionally include and compensate people with lived experiences of homelessness in decision-making at the State level.
- h. Incorporate learnings from the Ecosystem Power Map generated through the Task Force's work when working to shape equitable outcomes and changes to decision-making structures.
- i. Incorporating learning from the Ecosystem Power Map, system changes and new policies should take measurable steps towards promoting self-determination and power-sharing to benefit "below radar" groups (i.e., CSOs, tribal communities, historically underfunded communities, people experiencing homelessness, seasonal Latinx migrant farmworkers, and frontline provider staff).
- j. OHCS begin changing existing funding structure beginning in 2023-2025 biennium with the goal of addressing power imbalances between CBOs and CAAs, especially CSOs. Task Force continues to meet to evaluate successes, tweak and refine (e.g., competitive RFP process, targeted universalism pilot with x% of existing dollars, etc.).
- k. An independent entity shall be created to develop a praxis of assessment for use by agencies and/or partner organizations for ascertaining their cultural competency and develop specific action items to take to reduce disparities with findings from those assessment reported to this Task Force.
- l. Conduct an audit of OHCS' policies and practices that may influence racial disparities
- m. Review historic legislation that mandates current models in use at OHCS and determine appropriate updates to those pieces of legislation



Goal 2: Identify Needs


The Task Force offers the recommendations below to support the Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) and Oregon Housing Stability Council (OHSC) in receiving advice and information about needed services for individuals experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

- a. Set aside state resources to fund a multidisciplinary DEI audit examining efforts to actively reduce racial disparities to level set work across state, local, CSOs, and various partners, and identify what resources/TA are needed to get everyone aligned/level.
- b. Compensate people with lived experience of homelessness to identify needs with the State, with attention to what people need to meaningfully engage, (e.g., childcare access, transportation, shower access, and other needs).
- c. Build mechanisms by which consumers can give input and inform decision-makers about their experiences, and make sure the input is used to make improvements
- d. Require the state to receive input from culturally specific organizations and participants.
- e. Assess how/if current services are meeting needs, identifying redundancies unnecessary to meet the volume of needs, what's working/what's not? Phase out what's not working and grow/continue what is - recognize that's what's working may not live within your organization.

Goal 3: Change Funding Structure

The Task Force recommends the methods below as approaches by which the Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) and Oregon Housing Stability Council may receive advice and information about needed services for individuals experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

- a. The task force shall continue convening now through 2025 (with the option to continue) to provide oversight, continuous feedback, and direction to the state on the effectiveness of implemented recommendations that are aimed to address racial disparities in homelessness. State agencies supports models and solutions that work and phases out models that don't work re: racial disparities and homelessness. The Task Force will provide a biennial report to inform continuous improvement and the report will be sent to stakeholders.
- b. More transparency and accountability from OHCS and service providers (particularly with respect to demographic/cultural breakdown of who is receiving services, and in what dollar amounts (e.g., utilizing the RealD framework to track data)).
- c. Investment in a data system that provides a snapshot but also robust details beyond that which accurately reflects the stories of the work being done on the ground. System should allow inclusion of qualitative data and not create additional burden on agencies mandated to use federal systems, either through ease of use or through additional funding to support data position. Additionally, stakeholders will have access to and the ability to download disaggregated data.
- d. OHCS must provide direct funding from the state to CBOs, CSOs, and CAAs beginning in the 2023-2025 biennium. During the 2023-2025 biennium, the first iteration of this direct funding would take place and then be evaluated by an outside, neutral, culturally competent facilitator – (some recommended funding structures include targeted universalism in non-competitive procurement, competitive RFP processes, amended CAA distributions, etc.).

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- e. Within a framework of accountability to meet outcomes related to reducing disparities in homelessness, state provides flexible funds to CBOs.
 - f. In order to reimagine funding protocols, the surrounding infrastructure must include specific capacity building, funding for culturally specific entities, public transparency, evolving best practices (e.g., incorporate community-based participatory action research).
 - g. Provide ongoing culturally appropriate technical assistance and support (funding) for all CBOs/providers as well as state
 - h. Provide ongoing culturally appropriate technical assistance and support (funding) for Community Action Agencies who need help improving outcomes
 - i. Clearly identify the barriers to access in statute, rule, what's state and federal, what can we change sooner than later upon identifying the barriers to access (to resources for CSOs, CBOs, and participants) in statute and rule, utilize the Housing Subcommittee of the Racial Justice Council to establish a rubric of Racial Impact and inform policy, guide continuous improvement, and to ensure Oregon's stated commitment to racial justice.

Goal 4: Modify Contracting

The Task Force offers the recommendations below as methods by which the Housing and Community Services Department and Oregon Housing Stability Council may modify contracting process and eligibility for providers of services for individuals experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

- a. Align contracting timelines and processes across state agencies.
- b. OHCS, in alignment with other State agencies, articulate how equity goals will be measured and made transparent to the public in contracts. Consider use of dashboards for greater transparency.
- c. OHCS, in alignment with other State agencies, including the Racial Justice Council, builds in clear expectations around reducing racial disparities in contracts (numbers should “overrepresent” impact for populations disproportionately impacted by homelessness), with consequences or corrective actions when expectations are not met.
- d. Contracts require all agencies to engage in and complete training in Best Practices on equitable and just homeless service delivery; contracts include funding for agencies to meet this requirement.
- e. Review current systems to ensure that diverse populations have prioritized access to processes such as language-friendly application systems and culturally inclusive and low barrier methods of engagement.
- f. Contracts require meaningful, rich local collaborations to include historically minoritized and excluded populations.
- g. OHCS contracts establish a definition of and standard for cultural competence and require organizations receiving funding to meet the standard.
- h. OHCS, in alignment with other State agencies and through a transparent process, builds on outcomes based contracting efforts, examining its internal policies and systems, as well as including transparent local reporting on



outcomes, and strengthens focus on reducing racial disparities/increase access for CSO's. As part of these efforts, State agencies review policies with an eye toward removing policies that feed greater proportions of homelessness among communities of color and remove disparities.



Homeless Students Administrative Regulation

Bend-La Pine Schools



BEND-LA PINE SCHOOLS

Administrative School District No. 1

Deschutes County, Oregon

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

Name: Homeless Students

Section: Students

Code: JECBD-AR

Definitions

1. Enrollment: means attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
2. School of origin: the school that a student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled. When the student has completed the final grade served by the school of origin, the term "school of origin" shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.
3. Homeless student: individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes:
 - a. Students who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
 - b. Students who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
 - c. Students who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings; and
 - d. Migratory students who qualify as homeless because the students are living in circumstances described in a-c above.
4. Unaccompanied student: a student not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Assignment to School

The district shall, according to the student's best interest, continue the student's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, or enroll the student in a district school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the student is actually living are eligible to attend.

In determining the best interest of the student, the district shall:

1. Presume that keeping the student in their school of origin is in their best interest, unless doing so is contrary to the request of the student's parent or guardian;
2. Provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal, if the district sends a homeless student to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian;
3. Ensure that the district's liaison helps with placement or enrollment decisions for an unaccompanied student, and considers the request of the student, and provides a notice of the right to appeal on placement and enrollment decisions.

Enrollment

The district shall immediately enroll the student in the school selected even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as academic records, medical records, proof of residency or other documentation.

The district shall immediately contact the school last attended to obtain relevant academic and other student records.

If the student needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, the district shall immediately refer the parent or guardian to the district's liaison, who will help in obtaining necessary immunizations or records.

A student shall be granted enrollment even if he or she has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.

Records

Any records ordinarily maintained by the district, including immunization or medical records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records and evaluations for special services or programs, shall be maintained so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a homeless student enters a new school or school district, consistent with state and federal law.

Enrollment Disputes

If a dispute arises over school selection, enrollment or eligibility, the student shall be immediately admitted to the school requested, pending resolution of the dispute.

The parent or guardian of the student shall be provided with a written explanation of the district's decision regarding school selection, including the rights of the parent, guardian or student to appeal the decision through the McKinney-Vento Act dispute resolution and appeal process, including final appeal to the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) State Coordinator.

The student, parent or guardian shall be referred to the district's liaison, who shall ensure the resolution process is carried out as expeditiously as possible. In the case of an unaccompanied student, the district's liaison shall ensure the student is immediately enrolled in school pending the resolution of the dispute.

Services

Each homeless student shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students, including the following:

1. Transportation services;
2. Education services for which the student is eligible, such as:
 - a. Title I¹;
 - b. Special education;
 - c. Programs for English Language Learners;
 - d. Career and Technical Education;
 - e. Talented and gifted programs.
3. School nutrition programs.

Coordination

The district shall coordinate the provision of services to homeless students with local social service agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to homeless students and their families. Services will also be provided in cooperation with other districts on inter-district issues, such as transportation, transfer of school records, and issues concerning appropriate credit for full or partial course work completed at a prior school to ensure that homeless students have access to available educational and related services.

¹ All homeless students are automatically eligible for Title I services, regardless of their current academic performance.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, P.L. 107-110, 42 U.S.C. Sections 11431-11435

Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, P.L. 114-345, Title I, Part A

Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, P.L. 110-351, Title II, Section 204

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99

Letter Opinions, Office of the Attorney General (March 15, April 18, June 30, 1988).

Oregon Department of Education, Memos #23-1988-89, #42-1994-95.

Reviewed: 2/10/09, 1/5/18

Approved: 2/24/09, 2/5/18



Homeless Students & Students in Foster Care Administrative Policy Bend-La Pine Schools



BEND-LA PINE SCHOOLS

Administrative School District No. 1

Deschutes County, Oregon

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

Name: Homeless Students & Students in Foster Care

Section: Required Policies

Code: JECBD-AP

Homeless students and students placed in foster care in the district will have access to the education and other services needed to ensure that an opportunity is available to meet the same academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

A liaison for students in homeless situations will be designated by the district to carry out duties as required by law. The district will also appoint a foster care point of contact to carry out the duties required by law with respect to children in foster care.

The district will not stigmatize nor segregate homeless students or students in foster care on the basis of their status as homeless or their placement in foster care. A homeless student will be admitted to the district school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living or to the student's school of origin as requested by the parent and in accordance with the student's best interests. Students in foster care will remain in their school of origin unless a court determines that it is in the best interest of the student to move to the school district where the foster home is located. The district will permit a student who exits foster care at any point during the school year to continue to attend the same school until the end of the school year.

Transportation will be provided to and from a homeless student's school of origin at the request of the parent, or in the case of an unaccompanied student, the district's liaison for homeless students. The student will be immediately enrolled in the free lunch program. Transportation will be provided to and from a student in foster care's home and school of origin (and subsequent schools of origin) in coordination with the Department of Human Services (DHS). The student will be immediately enrolled in the free lunch program upon receipt of notice from DHS regarding the student's placement in foster care.

The superintendent will develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

END OF POLICY

Legal Reference(s)

[ORS 109.056](#)[ORS 294.100](#)[ORS 327.006](#)[ORS 339.115](#)[ORS 339.133](#)[ORS 433.267](#)[OAR 581-021-0045](#)[OAR 581-021-0046](#)

District Liaison

The district's liaison shall ensure that:

1. Homeless students are identified;
2. Homeless students enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in district schools;
3. Homeless families and students have access to and receive educational services through Head Start, Early Intervention and preschool services;
4. Homeless families and students receive educational services for which they are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services and other appropriate services;
5. Parents of homeless students are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to the students and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their students;
6. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is distributed where such students receive services (e.g., schools, shelters, public libraries and soup kitchens);
7. Enrollment disputes are mediated through McKinney-Vento Act dispute resolution procedure;
8. The parents of homeless students, or any unaccompanied student, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin, and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school selected;
9. School personnel, service providers and advocates working with homeless students and their families are informed of the liaison's duties.

The district's liaison shall coordinate and collaborate with the ODE state coordinator, community and school personnel responsible for the provision of educational and related services to homeless students.

Reviewed: 2/11/05, 2/21/05, 11/15/18

Approved: 2/21/05, 11/26/18



Working in Homeless Services
A Survey of the Field
Homelessness Research Institute



Working in Homeless Services: A Survey of the Field



Written By: Joy Moses, Vice President of Research and Evidence
Published: December 5, 2023

Anecdotal stories about challenges facing the homeless services workforce are commonplace.

Those who know people in the field have surely heard about the stresses of serving people with great needs and trying to achieve goals within organizations with limited resources. These stories suggest a need to be concerned about workers, but also for the well-being of people experiencing homelessness and the nation's efforts to end homelessness.

Earlier this year, the National Alliance to End Homelessness set out to better understand and document workforce challenges. As a part of these efforts, the Alliance conducted a nationwide survey of homeless services employees, learning about:

1. **A Mission-Driven Workforce.** Much of the workforce cites altruistic reasons for choosing and liking their profession. In total, 87 percent valued doing worthwhile work.
2. **Staffing Challenges.** Among respondents, 74 percent said that their agencies/organizations were understaffed, while 71 percent reported that their agencies/organizations experienced high employee turnover.
3. **Overwhelming Work Environments.** Homeless services personnel experience significant stress rooted in not being able to help enough people (69 percent). They also feel overworked (46 percent).
4. **Personal Sacrifices.** The workforce is overwhelmingly impacted by low salaries, leading to financial difficulties: they worry about paying for wants like vacations (54 percent) but also needs such as housing (44 percent).
5. **Harms to Service Delivery.** Employees indicate that workforce challenges translate into cutbacks in services and clients not fully getting the help they need.

The homeless services workforce should be appreciated for their mission-driven dedication to their work. However, they also desperately need additional resources, and other policy and practice supports, to ensure its continued work can meet the needs of all people experiencing homelessness.

Methodology

The Alliance created an online survey in Google Forms. It was distributed to the homeless services workforce via the organization's newsletter, social media, and an announcement at its national conference in July 2023. Some recipients of the survey link also shared it with their networks. The survey was conducted between July 17, 2023 and September 15, 2023.

The responses were analyzed by Alliance staff. Most respondents completed the survey in full. No question had a response rate below 91 percent. Although the vast majority of respondents were salaried employees, some received stipends or were part-time or volunteer workers. The reported data on salaries solely pertains to salaried employees working at least 35 hours per week.

Who Responded?

In total, 5,044 people responded to the survey.

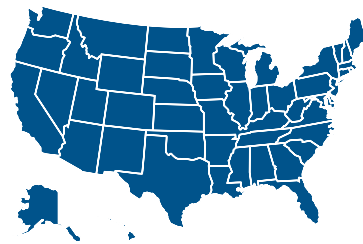
Location. Survey takers worked in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. Western and southern states were highly represented in the survey. However, these regions have the largest populations of people experiencing homelessness — thus, they may simply have more workers. Workers in northeast states may be slightly underrepresented, since those states are home to 16 percent of respondents but 21 percent of people experiencing homelessness.

Since the majority of the homeless population lives in urban areas, it was unsurprising that most (75 percent) of the respondents served these types of communities.

Survey Respondent Demographics. Survey participants were asked a series of demographic questions. Ideally, the Alliance would be able to compare its respondents to a comprehensive census of the homelessness workforce. However, such data does not exist — therefore, the Alliance cannot determine the extent to which these survey takers are representative of all the people doing this work.

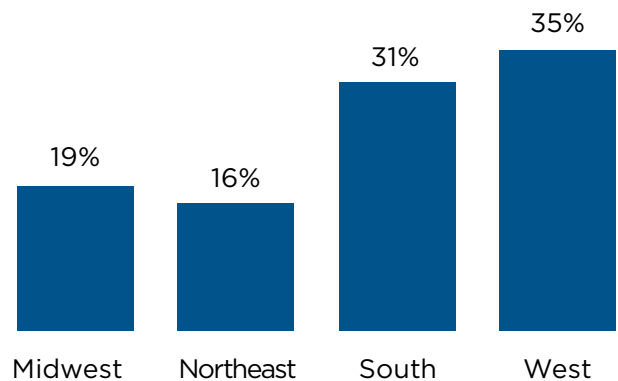
The respondents were overwhelmingly women (77 percent), matching anecdotal information from the field. The Alliance’s interactions with the field have suggested a workforce that is significantly female.

Where Respondents Work

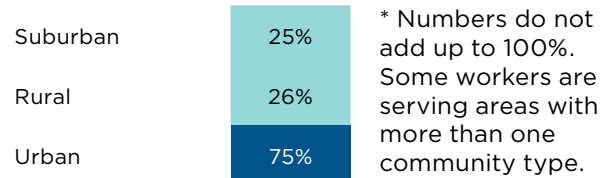


All 50 States and the District of Columbia.

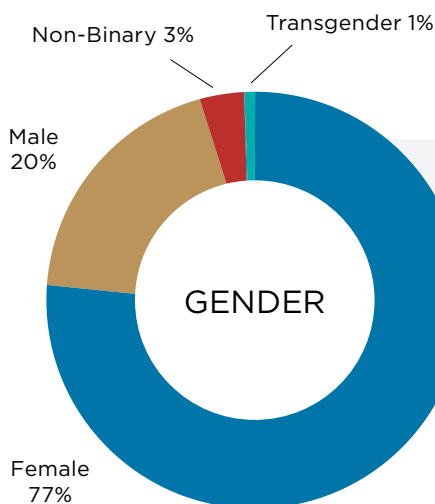
Region of the Country



Community Type



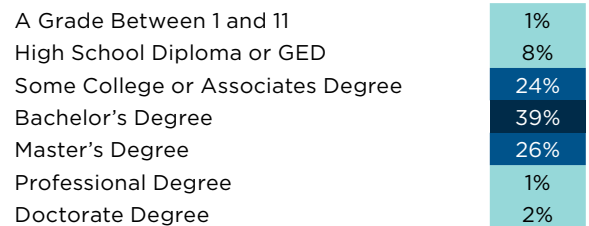
Survey Respondent Demographics



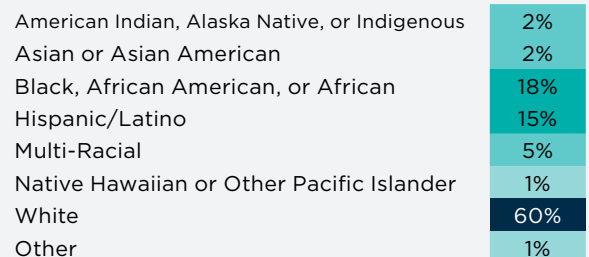
* Some respondents identified with more than one gender category (eg, “transgender” and “female”). Thus, the population shares add up to a little more than 100 percent.

* This chart merges the responses related to race and ethnicity. Some Hispanics/Latinos also identified with a specific racial group such as “white”. Thus, the population shares add up to more than 100 percent.

Educational Attainment



Race/Ethnicity

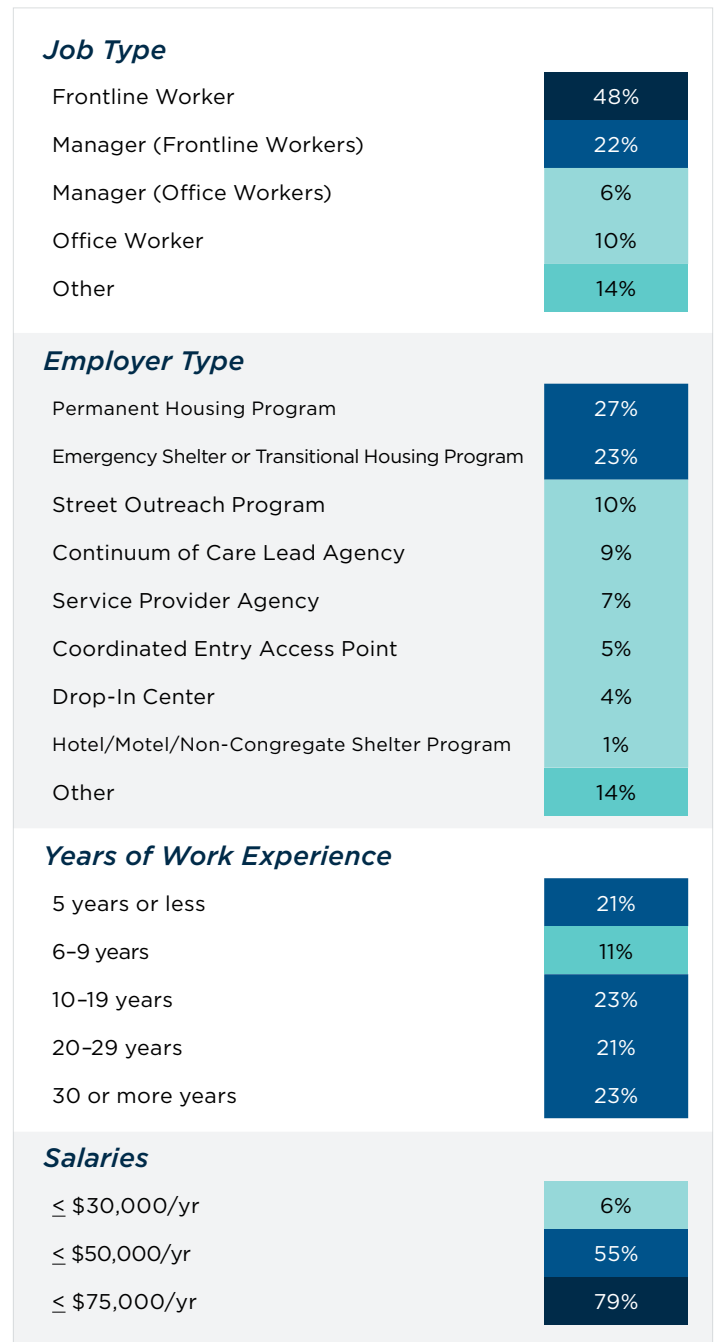


Additionally, the respondents were racially and ethnically diverse. Group representation in the survey resembled overall [Census population data](#) for the United States. Notably, however, those in the Black, African American, or African group were overrepresented in the survey (18 percent of respondents) compared to their share of the general population (12 percent). It is possible that this group is simply overrepresented within the homelessness workforce — i.e., group members may be more likely than others to choose this type of work. Importantly, Black people are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness, representing 37 percent of the homeless population in 2022. This seismic impact of the issue on Black people may be drawing more group members to the profession. However, if the Alliance’s respondents are representative (i.e., Black people make up 18 percent of the workforce), there may be a disproportionality of fewer Black people working in homelessness — the expectation might be that group workforce numbers would also be around 37 percent.

Finally, the sample of survey respondents was overwhelmingly educated — 92 percent had at least some college training, while 68 percent had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Without the benefit of being able to compare these numbers to a full census of the workforce, the Alliance must acknowledge the possibility that the survey simply failed to significantly reach non-college-educated people. Such workers likely have the lowest pay and the most underheard voices.

Work-Related Characteristics. Fifty-five percent of full-time workers who responded to the survey earned less than \$55,000 per year, putting them at severe risk of being unable to afford their own housing. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, on average, a United States worker must earn \$49,234 to afford a one-bedroom apartment and \$59,446 for a two-bedroom unit. The Alliance previously estimated a [\\$4.8 billion deficit](#) between current homeless service sector salaries and what is needed to bring workers’ pay up to adequate amounts that would allow them to comfortably afford housing.

In addition to being at risk of not being able to afford housing, respondents were overwhelmingly frontline workers¹ or supervisors/managers of frontline workers (70 percent). Most worked within permanent housing (27 percent) or temporary housing programs (24 percent). But this group is employed in other capacities, such as by Continuum of Care (CoC) agencies, and have diverse levels of experience. Some were just starting their careers while others have been in the field for decades.



1 “Frontline worker” was defined as spending at least 25 percent of work time with clients who are currently or formerly homeless.

Why Do People Work in the Homelessness Field?

Altruism and a sense of calling play a significant role in drawing people into, and staying in, these professions. When given the opportunity to describe their reasons for working in the homelessness field, multiple people spoke about their religious faith. Some noted a desire to help: “No one else was stepping up to do the necessary work.” AmeriCorps and Peace Corps were mentioned as gateways into service. Respondents also valued opportunities to develop strong relationships. The survey specifically asked about relationships with clients and co-workers, but respondents also mentioned valued the opportunity to develop positive relationships with supervisors, board members, and collaborating organizations.

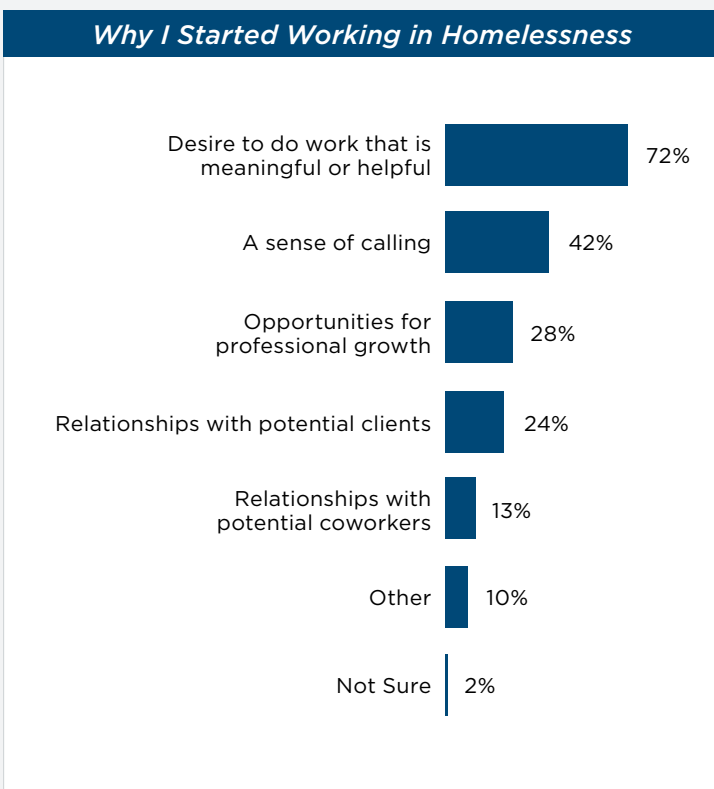
Although unprompted, at least 182 respondents volunteered that they (or a loved one) had lived experience of homelessness and/or related challenges with mental health and addiction. They felt drawn to helping others in similar circumstances. As one person said, “I got the

help I needed as a youth staying in shelter. There were a lot of challenges, but it was one of the few places I remember feeling like I could breathe. I want to create that sense of safety for others.”

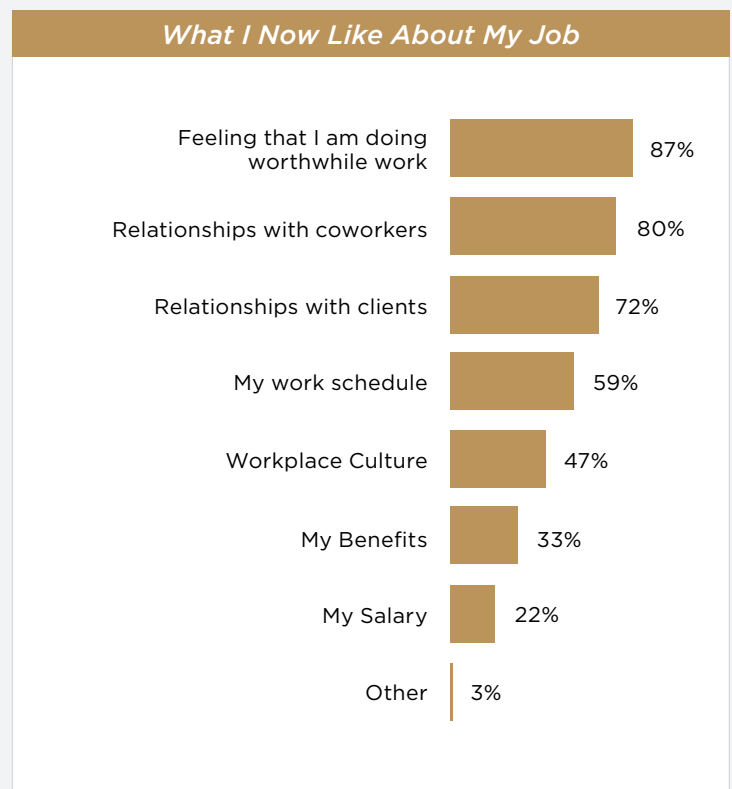
A segment of people connected to their profession via previous work or concern about specific subpopulations. These include veterans, human trafficking survivors, and children and youth.

Finally, several respondents shared some very practical reasons for engaging in this work: for example, being retired but still wanting or needing to work. Others left corporate America to try something new. A slice of survey takers expressed an appreciation for their salary, benefits, work-life balance, and work-from-home opportunities. Some were assigned to homelessness work by agencies that had broader missions. And then there were those who lost employment during the pandemic (or at some other time) and simply needed to pay their bills. Perhaps, some of those falling into this bucket share the sentiments of one survey taker: “Originally [I] began working in homeless services just to have a job but ended up falling in love with the job. I found my calling.”

Reasons for Working in the Homelessness Workforce



The answer options for these two questions were similar but not identical. Please see [the appendix](#) for the exact wording of the questions.



Difficult Work Environments: Insufficient Staffing and High Turnover

The good intentions and sense of purpose expressed by many homeless services professionals often coexist with challenging working conditions. Significant weight falls on their shoulders. Importantly, these circumstances also dramatically impact people experiencing homelessness and the nation's goal of reducing and ending homelessness.

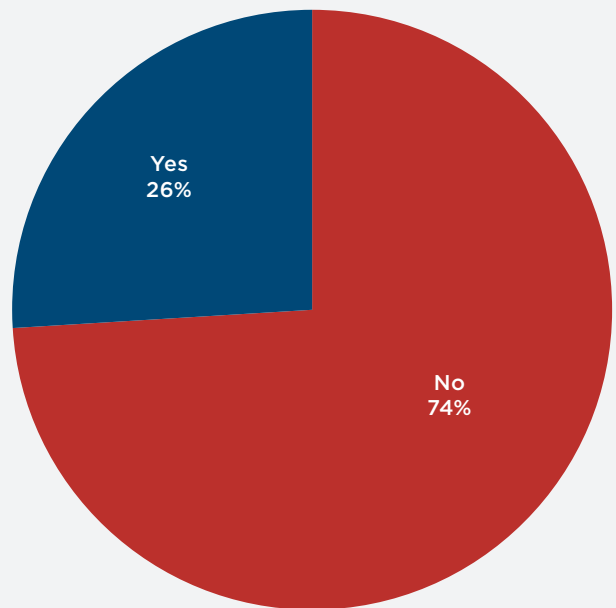
Three out of every four workers indicated that their organizations/agencies were understaffed, not having enough employees to meet important goals such as serving every person in need of help.

Further, far too many workplaces were grappling with high rates of employee turnover — 71 percent of respondents said that this was an issue at their jobs. For employees, the results associated with high turnover included increased stress (90 percent) and overwork (64 percent). They also reported the following impacts:

- **Employee Despondency.** Several people mentioned words like “burnout,” “low morale,” “lack of motivation,” “underappreciated,” “hopelessness,” “disgruntled,” and “apathy.”
- **Threats to Funding.** Multiple people mentioned turnover as a factor preventing the fulfillment of service contracts and grant deliverables, potentially leading to losses of funding.
- **Low-Quality Staffing.** According to one person, “We keep toxic staff due to staffing issues because it’s hard to fill positions.” Another mentioned an overreliance on volunteers who lack commitment (therefore putting more stress on staff).
- **Inefficient Use of Resources.** Some respondents spoke about constantly holding new employee trainings, which costs time and resources. At least one person mentioned resources being wasted on regularly paying existing employees for overtime.

Does your organization/agency have enough employees to meet its goals?

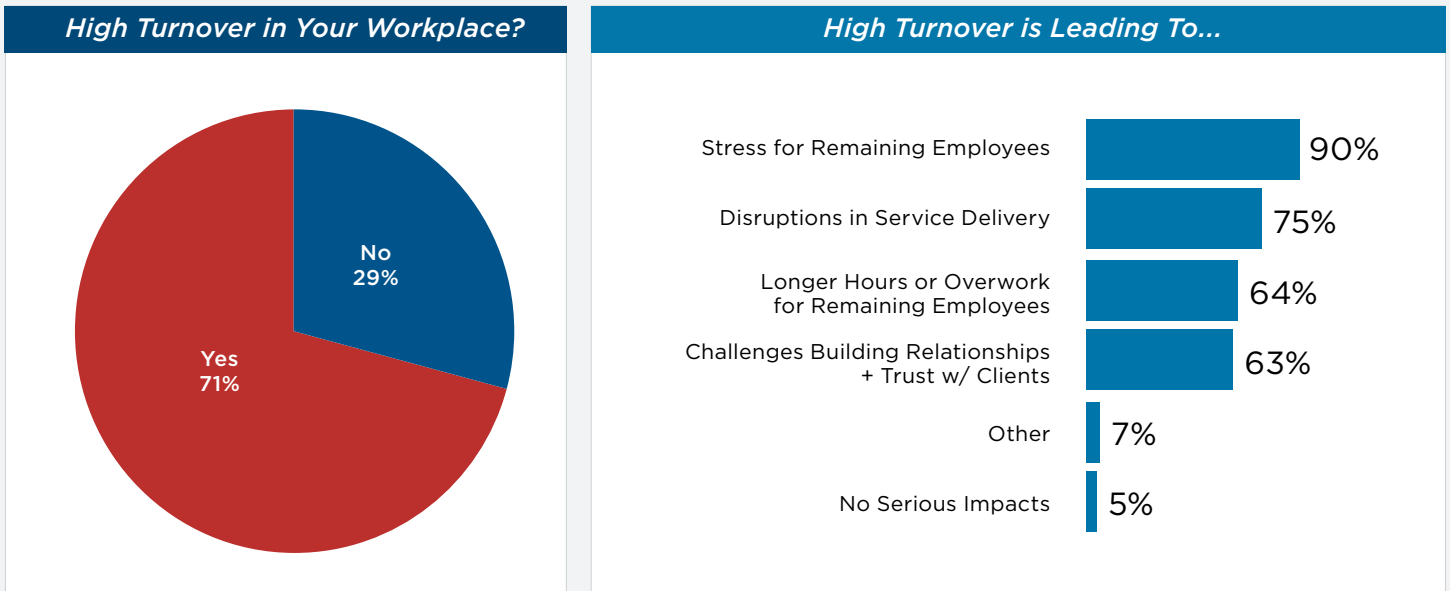
(for example, serving all people who need help or meeting all your administrative requirements)



- **Leadership Challenges.** Employees indicated that it was hard to trust leadership in such environments. Building staff cohesion is difficult. And “leadership can’t make strategic plans because they only think in crisis mode.”
- **Personal Dangers and Sacrifices.** With high turnover and not enough staffing, existing staff are sometimes put in physically dangerous situations. And some indicated not being able to take time off due to staffing challenges (therefore losing earned leave).
- **Organizational/Agency Losses.** With turnover, institutional knowledge is lost. And some respondents reported that their work environments have led to lost trust and respect from partnering agencies, damaging their relationships.

“There is less consistency in service delivery due to insufficient training. Supervisors are typically too busy trying to hire people to train the ones they already have. The newbie is thrown into new challenges without knowing what they need to. There is such a high demand for services but regardless of how busy we are, the client deserves that support person to be competent and well-trained.” — Survey Respondent

High Employee Turnover



Undoubtedly, these various factors impact clients. For example, threats to funding can translate into diminished service offerings, and situations that are dangerous for staff may also be dangerous for clients. Further, the survey revealed issues that have an even more direct connection to clients.

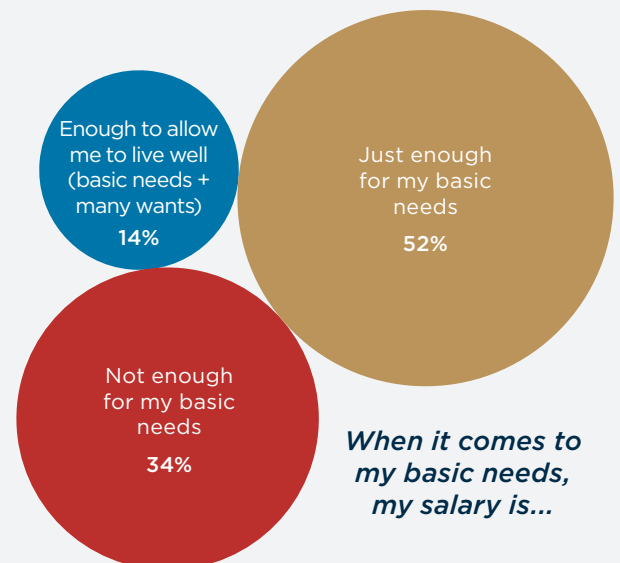
Of those in high turnover environments, 75 percent say that this factor disrupts service delivery, and 63 percent indicate that it hurts their ability to build relationships and trust with clients. In response to questions about high turnover environments, respondents also shared:

- **Realities of Service Disruption.** One person simply said, “Clients [are] kicked out.” Others spoke of service delays, the need to close clinics on days when staffing is short, and an inability to meet all client needs.
- **Crowded Caseloads.** Presumably, crowded caseloads reduce the time and attention available to individual clients.
- **Slowed Housing Progress.** A few respondents mentioned slowed progress in getting people off the streets and in ending homelessness.

Salary-Related Hardships

Human services professionals are often underpaid, often earning less than what their education and experience would suggest, and struggling to afford basics such as housing. Thus, the Alliance asked a series of questions designed to understand how homeless services salaries were impacting people’s lives.

Basic Needs. A portion of respondents did not want to share their salary information. Of those responding (and working at leady 35 hours per week), 55 percent were making under \$50,000 per year. One in three said that their salaries were not enough to meet their basic needs. And, at the opposite end of the spectrum, only 14 percent said that they earned enough to live well (having basic needs and many wants met).

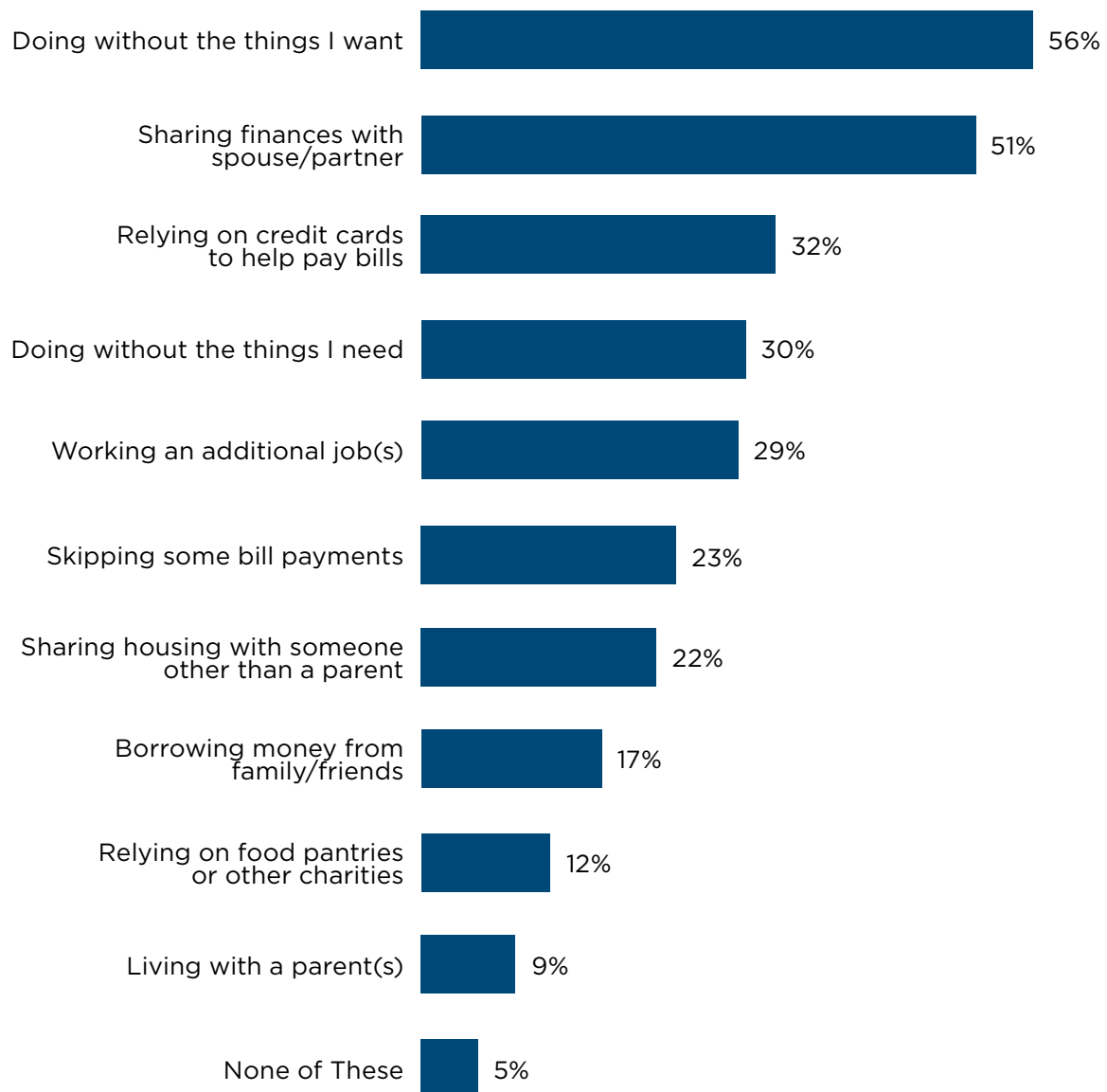


Making Ends Meet. It's clear that homeless services workers are making ends meet (or failing to do so) in a variety of ways. Most were making sacrifices — i.e., 56 percent were doing without things that they want. Beyond that, respondents roughly fell within two camps:

Economic Security from Sources Other Than Work. A number of respondents indicated some level of economic security coming from sources other than their jobs. Chief among them was sharing resources with a spouse/partner (51 percent) or a parent (9 percent). Survey takers wrote in other examples, such as pensions from previous jobs, stock portfolios, real estate holdings (i.e., being a landlord, having paid of their mortgage, or profiting from the sale of property), inheritances, no educational debt, and child support and alimony.

Some of the people in this category may not be living luxuriously, but they have other sources of income that are helping them to make ends meet in ways that are relatively unharmed to their personal well-being.

The Following Allow Me to Make Ends Meet ...

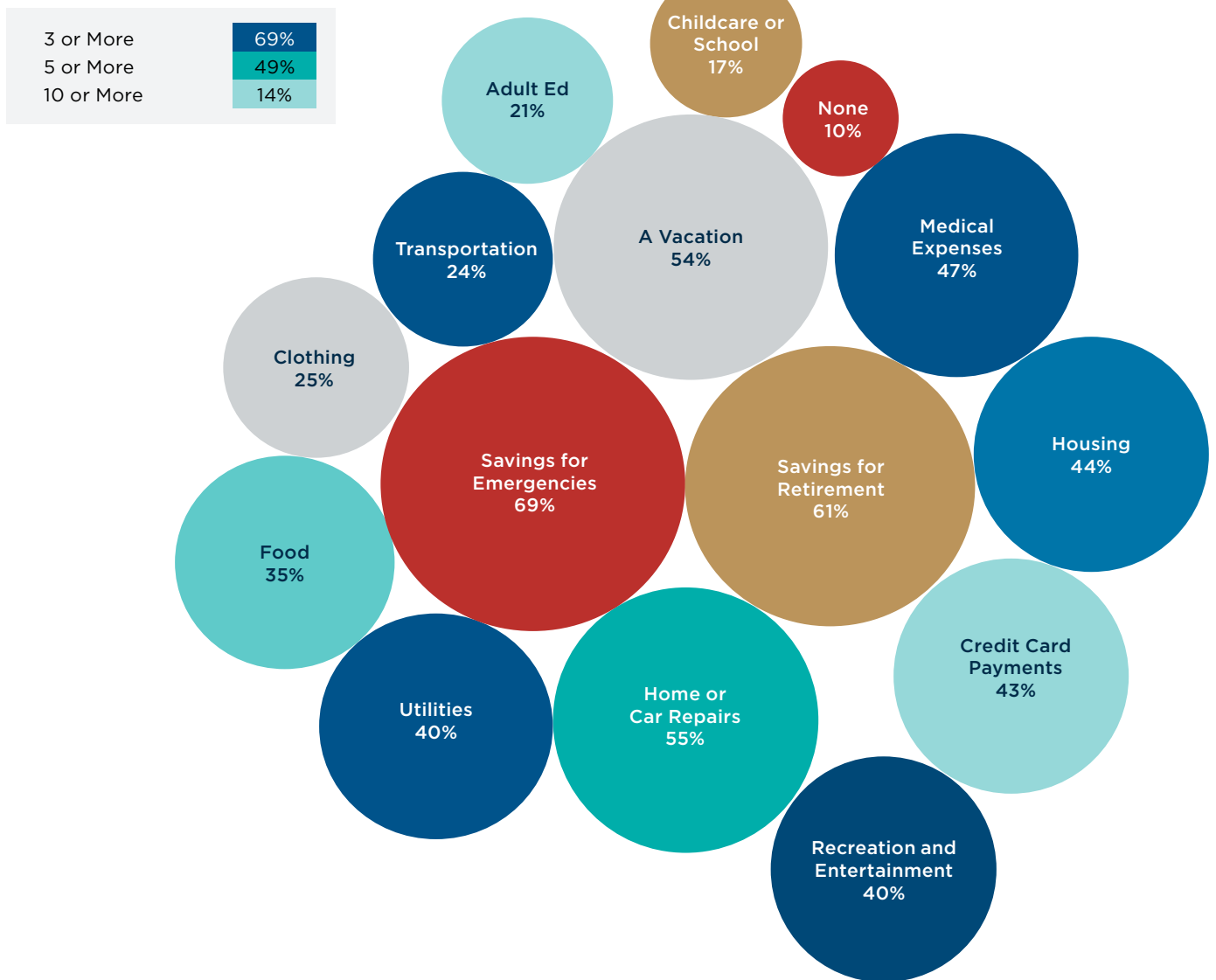


Clearly Struggling Financially. Other respondents mentioned factors that are associated with concerning levels of financial hardship, such as relying on credit cards to pay bills (32 percent) or relying on charities (12 percent). Some of the write-in answers included taking out several personal loans, having teenage children take jobs to help out, donating plasma, skipping meals, and filing for bankruptcy. A few people indicated that they themselves were experiencing homelessness or relying on government programs targeting people living in poverty (e.g., subsidized housing and energy assistance).

Some workers may be spreading themselves thin. Twenty-nine percent of respondents said they work an additional job(s). Others mentioned an at-home business and having multiple “side hustles.”

Finally, survey takers flagged other areas that may prove concerning. First, there were those who mentioned the value of not having to make student loan payments due to COVID relief measures. That relief expired in the fall of 2023, which may have a sizable impact on homeless services workers — a significant number of whom have obtained varying levels of post-secondary education. A second concern is that at least two people indicated that they were making ends meet by not having children — thus, salaries for the field may be impacting significant areas of life like family planning.

Over the Last Year, I've Worried About Paying For...

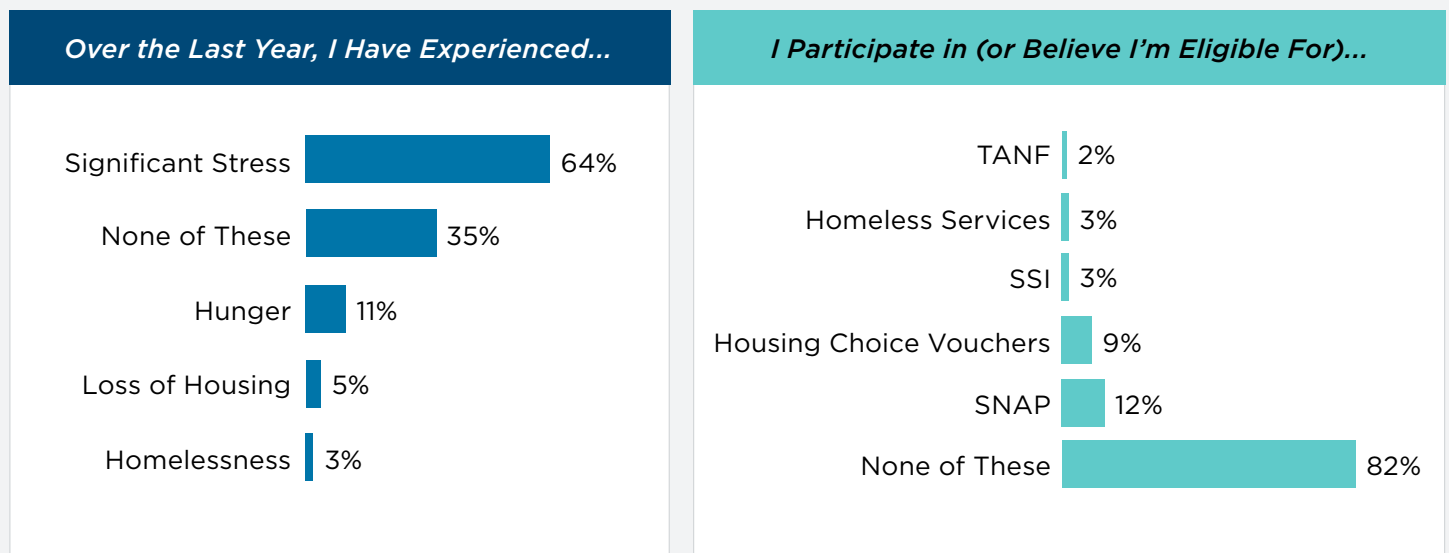


Worries About Paying for Needs and Wants.

The survey dug a little deeper into the types of things workers may be worried about paying for in their efforts to make ends meet. The respondents indicated items that severely threaten their financial security, like savings for emergencies (69 percent). They also flagged challenges that contribute to a happy life, such as vacations (54 percent). Most concerning are their worries about paying for basic necessities like food (35 percent) and utilities (40 percent). Forty-four percent of these employees who are focused on helping others find housing are worried about how they will pay for their own.

Poverty Indicators. Finally, the survey probed whether there were portions of the workforce in the nation’s most dire financial circumstances. Salaries are a source of stress for most workers (64 percent). Much smaller numbers shared signs of other poverty indicators. Notably, some were themselves experiencing homelessness — living in temporary housing programs and cars.

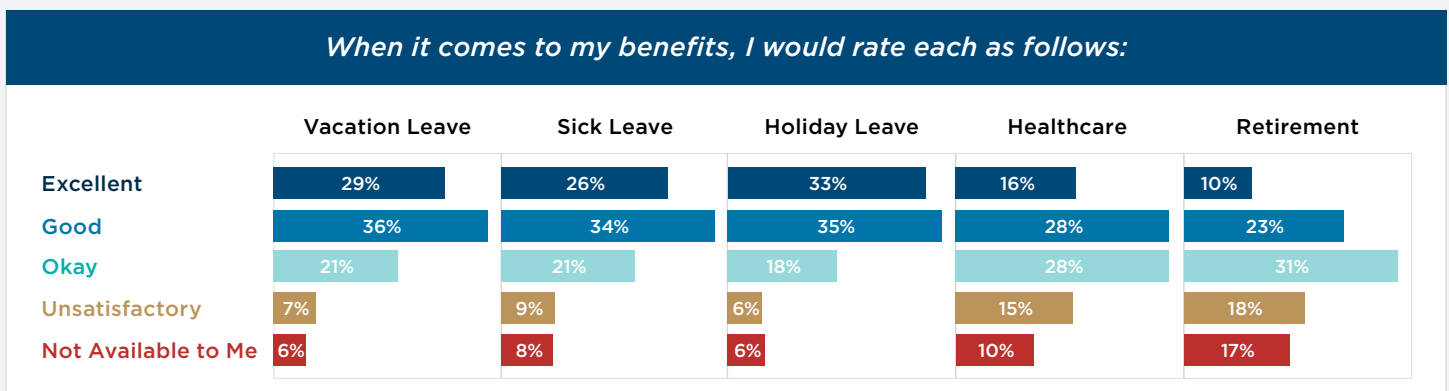
Poverty Indicators Rooted in Current Salary



Benefits

Survey respondents are largely content with their benefits, rating each type as being at least “okay.” Workers are least satisfied with their healthcare and retirement benefits.

Unfortunately, a slice of workers completely lack access to certain offerings. Respondents were least likely to have retirement benefits – 16 percent of all those responding lacked them.



Workplace Challenges

The Alliance asked about other challenges of working in homeless services. Previously expressing altruistic reasons for entering the profession, many respondents identified factors rooted in concerns about the people they serve. The biggest identified workplace challenges were 1) frustrations associated with not being able to help more people (69 percent) and 2) stress and worries about the well-being of clients (60 percent).

Within my current job, I am experiencing the following challenges...

Frustration (Can't give more people housing and services)	69%
Stress/worry about the well-being of clients	60%
Being overworked	46%
Limited rewards or wins tied to work	37%
Overly burdensome paperwork requirements	36%
Limited opportunities to advance in my career	35%
Limited authority to make decisions	25%
Lack of respect for my opinions and contributions	21%
Fears for my safety	13%
None of these	9%
Other	6%
Discrimination or uncomfortable situations (Race/Ethnicity)	6%
Discrimination or uncomfortable situations (Gender)	5%
Discrimination or uncomfortable situations (LGBTQ Identity)	3%

More individualized challenges like being overworked (46 percent) were also highly represented. And, with the opportunity to write in additional challenges, the following also stood out:

Bureaucracy. Several respondents expressed frustration with funding requirements, both those imposed by the federal government and foundations. Respondents also mentioned database concerns (i.e., having to enter the same information into two databases and systems not being user-friendly) and funding reimbursement delays that impact organizational functioning.

Management Challenges. Some respondents indicated concerns about management and office politics. Such concerns occur across fields and generally within the world of work. However, there should be some exploration of how the stresses of this work and high turnover impact homeless services workplaces. These factors pose unique leadership challenges and may affect team building and cohesion.

Other Forms of Discrimination. The survey specifically asked about workplace discrimination based on race, gender, and LGBTQ identity. Workers wrote in experiences with coworkers rooted in age, disability, religion, and lived experience of homelessness. And at least one respondent was concerned about the discrimination faced by his/her clients.

Worries About Other Staff Members. Multiple managers were concerned about their staff being overworked and underpaid. Some people were just generally concerned about the well-being of their peers.

Job Insecurity. A couple of respondents worried about the insecurity of funding streams and, therefore, whether their jobs were at risk.

Public Perceptions. Respondents spoke about NIMBYism² and an absence of support from their communities.

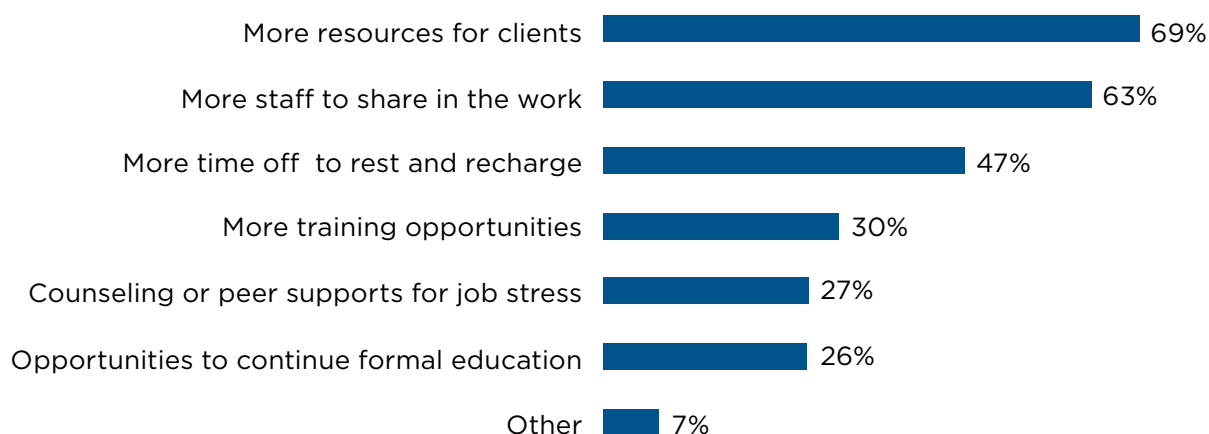
2 “NIMBY” stands for Not in My Back Yard. Merriam-Webster further defines the term as follows: “opposition to the locating of something considered undesirable (such as a prison or incinerator) in one’s neighborhood.”

“... We are also faced with constant misinformation, fear, and anger from community members who don’t understand factors that lead to a person becoming unhoused. Additionally, landlords put up several barriers to being able to obtain or maintain housing for our clients.” — Survey Respondent

Workplace Needs

When asked the question about job-related needs, participants echoed responses similar to others noted elsewhere in the survey. For example, respondents want resources to help them better serve clients, and resources to provide relief for understaffed workplaces. Sizable numbers also requested more training and supports to manage on-the-job stress. Nearly half (47 percent) wanted more time off to rest and recharge. Their comments suggested barriers to using paid time off. As one respondent put it, “[I need the] ability to use the time off I have earned. Work is so busy I now lose PTO each year as there is too much work to do, not enough time.”

Things I Still Need to Do My Job Well



When asked to fill in “other” needs, an overwhelming majority took the opportunity to find various and diverse ways of reiterating the need for better salaries and benefits. Some of these suggestions were quite modest. For example, one survey taker simply wanted a yearly cost of living raise.

Otherwise, individual people offered specific asks that could easily be grouped into categories, including:

Funding stability for their agencies/ organizations (e.g., multi-year funding cycles and unrestricted funding)

Student loan repayment assistance

Executive and other types of mentorship opportunities

Adequate physical workspaces

Mental health leave

Technology upgrades (e.g., non-refurbished computers, work cell phones, paid Zoom accounts, useful software)

New types of staffing (e.g., maintenance workers for workspaces, security guards, and childcare)

Career ladders

Appreciation (e.g., from the community, perks like monthly lunches)

Home buying programs for employees

Remote or at-home work opportunities

Schedule flexibility

Shorter work weeks

“The Trainings that are required for us as staff are hard to get. It is like a feeding frenzy to sign up. Often I can never get any of the required trainings because they are full. It reminds me of trying to get beyonce tickets.” — Survey Respondent

Future Plans

Given some of the stated challenges, one might expect that a number of people would be contemplating an exit from a career in the homeless services field. Indeed, 37 percent of those participating in the Alliance’s survey said they were considering leaving their jobs. By far, the most cited reasons for potentially leaving were limited salary and benefits (73 percent) and on-the-job stress (68 percent). Within the open comment space, many decided to go deeper into issues related to these topics:

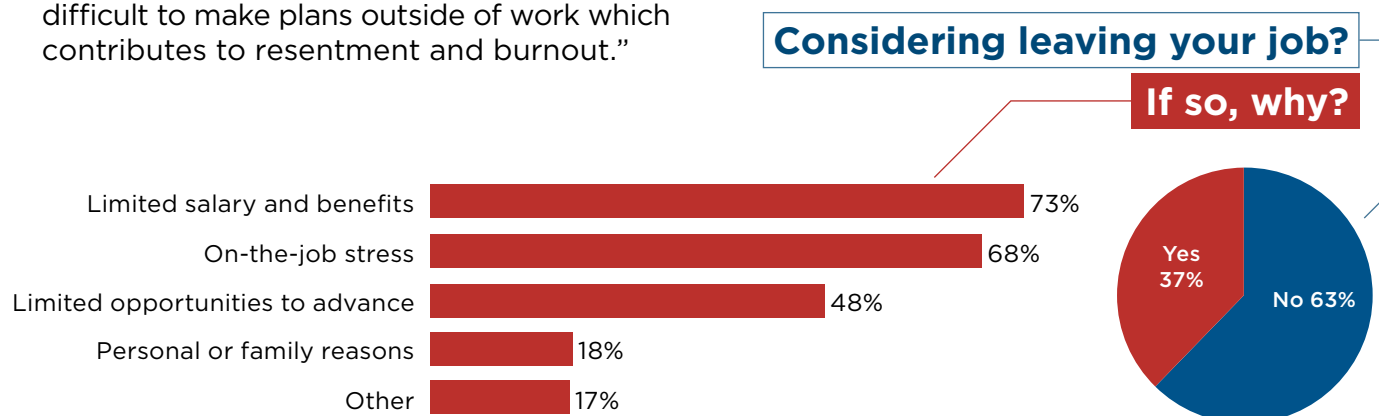
- “I’m tired and though I’m finally in a decent place financially. It took 12 years and I worry what my life will be like when I retire.”
- “Financial need. I’ll lose my house if I can’t make more.”
- “[Stresses of] witnessing participants pass away and seeing participants cycle back through the shelter system after being housed.”
- “I love this work. This work is my calling. But I should be paid fairly. And I get dismissed when I even bring it up. As someone with over 15 years [of experience] . . . my salary should be more than 50k a year. And our board of supervisors and leaders act like this is unreasonable.”
- “With my current job, I co-manage a 24/7 shelter with a team of 23 people. I cannot have a life outside of the job because I am frequently called into work in the shelter even when I am not on-call. It makes it difficult to make plans outside of work which contributes to resentment and burnout.”

Notably, there were some individuals who had seemingly innocuous reasons for contemplating an exit from their job; for instance, it was time for them to retire or they were interested in a new type of work. A segment of respondents were frustrated with working with clients, citing a lack of appreciation and follow-through on their part.

Finally, multiple people simply seemed disillusioned by the lack of resources to solve the problem and the lack of help from the federal government:

- “Burned out. Systems are broken. Tired of fight for change.”
- “Feels like never-ending crisis.”
- “It is depressing to see agency level staff work so hard while the federal policy and budgeting is so weak. It’s hard to know what the solutions could be — but to know that they will never be achieved.”
- “Depression at feeling that no matter what we do in our CoC, the problem cannot be solved without federal intervention that I don’t see coming. The work both at direct service level and administrative level feels Sisyphean.”

Despite all of the above, 63 percent of respondents **were not** considering leaving their jobs.



Moving Forward

The goal of ending homelessness cannot be achieved without changes to the status quo. Workers in the field are daily managing weighty challenges. Professionally, they are trying to serve people within organizations that are understaffed and experiencing high turnover. Personally, they are worried about paying their own bills — including how they will keep themselves housed. Their well-being directly impacts the well-being of clients and the movement to end homelessness.

Implementing Systemic Solutions

Supporting the homeless services workforce is a major policy need that can't be met with one-off or simple solutions. These policy and practice changes cannot happen without major increases in investments. All levels of government and private sector foundations have a role to play in ensuring progress. Significantly, the federal government often packs the biggest punch in terms of its reach and resources. Thus, advocacy directed at Congress and federal administrative agencies is critical. Federal agencies also have a role to play in 1) [reducing administrative burdens](#) on homeless services leaders, so that they can focus more attention on managing workforce challenges, and 2) offering technical assistance and other supports to help the field emerge from the current crisis.

The Alliance is committed to working with the homeless services field and other national partners to further develop and promote needed solutions. Necessary change may not happen overnight, but there is no other choice but to move forward if the nation wants to reach important goals like ensuring [appropriate implementation of Housing First](#) and ending homelessness.

Low pay, high turnover, and lack of resources are a resounding theme throughout responses to this survey of homeless service providers across the country. It is clear that this sector will not be able to make progress until significant funding is allocated to address this crisis.

