

How can we use the information from the Root Causes of Homelessness video to change the narrative about homelessness in Pierce County?

Group Discussion Summary • Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness • 8.11.23

What are the root causes of homelessness in King County?

Why do some cities in the U.S. have relatively low rates of homelessness while in other cities thousands live without shelter? Gregg Colburn, assistant professor of real estate at the University of Washington, dives into this question in his new book *Homelessness is a Housing Problem* (co-written by Clayton Page Aldern). In this interview, Gregg compares rent prices, poverty, drug dependency and other factors to find out why so many in Seattle and our region struggle to find housing. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0APR7dt-uZ8>

Homelessness Is a Housing Problem

How Structural Factors Explain U.S. Patterns, Colburn & Gregg

TPL has two copies with zero holds presently.

Tactics to Change the Conversation

- Excellent, excellent video. Counters stereotypes against evidence-based data. Makes clear housing stock is a primary issue. Same message as the book, but in seven minutes.
- We felt that these videos should be sent to all of the elected people in western Washington. And those running for office or contemplating and bring up in candidate forums.
- Cynthia Stewart agreed to send to all the elected officials (though it may take a couple of days to get through the whole list); but can't send to candidates because of role with League of Women Voters. *Hoping someone else can take that on.*
- Push data to change stereotypes, when talking with govt and social media (if you have the guts).
- People don't always respond well to facts and statistics. Need to also move people emotionally.
- Make local govt aware of disparities by pairing data with individual stories.
- Maybe it could be presented as a public health issue?
- Instagram memes would be a good way to get this information out in smaller messages.

Other Observations

- The musical chairs analogy has been around for at least 3 decades. It's like Groundhog Day. Elliot Liebow used this in 1995 in *Tell Them Who I Am: The Lives of Homeless Women*
- Relationship dynamics impact homelessness for sure, which is also geographically specific. From a LE perspective, lost everything in a breakup, including credit, home, and financial stability. The inability to retain financial stability isn't a small factor.

- Women are particularly vulnerable, especially following breakup or divorce, and also for those with the added responsibility for children. Laws are different from state to state about division of property following divorce.
- Must include racial inequity in addressing stereotypes around homelessness. Hard to add another layer, but systemic racism is a factor in housing. Read 'The Sum of Us,' Heather McGee for analysis. eg: a Black homeowner will get a lower appraisal than a white owner for the same house.
- Policy makers and government staff people neither recognize the racial equity concerns nor tell the truth about homelessness or how the government response works or doesn't. The government folks both reinforce the negative stereotypes of unhoused people ("they refuse services") AND lie about the availability of appropriate shelter beds, the impact of the sweeps, the actual "post-emergency shelter" pathways to stable housing, etc.
- What about the issues that push people into homelessness - we need jobs!
- Some will not become employed or increase income 0-60%AMI social housing - take the profit motive out of desperation
- Upstream causes of homelessness can be addressed with 1) social housing 2) single-payer healthcare 3) living wages.
- There is social hesitation to look upstream

Notes and Resources List

New and Notable

TODAY & TOMORROW: Fabulous Finds August 11th and 12th. Contact Theresa if you have donations tpdrutis@nctacoma.org

Here is the link to the PC Select Committee on Homelessness:

<https://www.piercecountywa.gov/8125/Select-Committee-on-Homelessness>

Charlie's Dinosaur is giving out school supplies tomorrow at Joseppi's Restaurant, 11AM-1PM, 2207 N Pearl St. Pizza and treats for kids.

Tacoma Recovery Center is hosting OVERDOSE AWARENESS RESOURCE DAY-food, beverages, community resources, support, phones for those who qualify, free fun, and music, AUGUST 23RD (11AM-3PM). My number for more information 971-246-7076

If you are interested learning more about HMIS

<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hmis/hmis-data-and-technical-standards/>

How to refer folks for possible placement in our isolation and quarantine facility:

<https://www.tpchd.org/home/showpublisheddocument/10666/638013593623900000>

Everyone should connect with Isiah to get masks for air quality. Email him at:

icocroft@tpchd.org As you know, masks help with poor air as well helping reduce the transmission of cough cough, COVID and other diseases.

Do you have any outreach items you need or to share? Post them in the chat and I'll grab them, or enter them here: Outreach Supply Need and Share form:
<https://forms.gle/2zfK8Y5JvC1K5eXLA>

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<https://www.piercecountywa.gov/8125/Select-Committee-on-Homelessness>

Community Spotlight Opportunity: Tell the coalition about your organization's good work. Contact tpdrutis@nctacoma.org to schedule a brief presentation. 🙏

Recent Press

Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing, National Low Income Housing Coalition
<https://nlihc.org/oor>

Ongoing Resources and Needs

Outreach Supply Need and Share form: <https://forms.gle/2zfK8Y5JvC1K5eXLA>

How to sign up for Coalition listserv:

You can sign up for the email lists here: <http://pchomeless.org/Home/Listserv>

Pierce County Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness can be found here:

<https://www.piercecountywa.gov/7309/Comprehensive-Plan-to-End-Homelessness>

Please sign up to the inclement weather listserv at

<https://www.pchomeless.org/Home/Listserv>