

# **Successful and Proven Real World Solutions to Reduce Homelessness**

**Lebanon Oregon Presentation  
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## **Many Communities Have Made Great Improvements**

**Many communities have realized dramatic and real decreases in street-level homelessness.**

*Note: Street-level homelessness is defined as persons who are experiencing homelessness in parks, under bridges, in wooded areas, on beaches, in CBDs, etc.*

## **While Many Communities Have Struggled - What Has Been Your Response?**

- 1- Do nothing because of NIMBY'ism**
- 2- Wait/hope for the Federal and/or State Government to solve YOUR problems**
- 3- Do not make political waves, instead make a bunch of small tactical decisions that do not yield to real improvements**
- 4- Study and meet, then meet and study . . . paralysis of analysis**
- 5- Pursue idealistic programs that sound great on paper, but are not financially affordable nor sustainable over the long term**

# While Many Communities Have Struggled - What Has Been Your Response?

- 1- Do nothing because of NIMBY'ism  
→ **Never pull the trigger.**
- 2- Wait/hope for the Federal and/or State Government to solve YOUR problems  
→ **In never-*ever*-land wishing upon a star while waiting for Santa.**
- 3- Do not make political waves, instead make a bunch of small tactical decisions that do not yield to real improvements  
→ **Political correctness leads to wimpy inaction - never make the needed “Big” changes.**
- 4- Study and meet, then meet and study . . . paralysis of analysis  
→ **Waiting for a “silver bullet” to appear.**
- 5- Pursue idealistic programs that sound great on paper, but are not financially affordable nor sustainable over the long term  
→ **Wastes time.**

## The Same Challenges

**Communities Across the USA Many of the Same Challenges and Problems.**

## But Different Solutions

**Communities Have Different Service Delivery Systems, Service Levels, Infrastructures, Assets and Resources.**

## The Condition of Homelessness is Very Costly

- a- Human tragedy affecting many individuals and their families.
  - b- Creates major drain on local government resources.
  - c- Overwhelms the criminal justice system (eg police, courts and jails).
  - d- Overloads emergency rooms/departments.
  - e- Diverts limited non-profit resources.
  - f- Hurts and suppresses economic development.
  - g- Frightens local residents.
- > Overall Very Expensive on Many Levels.

## If You Want, You Can Make Big Improvements !!

**You can get real reductions in homelessness !!**

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- 4- Significantly Increase Street Graduations Rates.
- 5- Reduce the Rate of New Homelessness.**

# Key Concepts

## Have a Bias for Action -> Just Start

**Do not do a long and dragged out “Theoretical” study . . .**

**Instead do a fast “Action Plan” . . .**

**Then Implement Your Action Plan as Fast as You Can!**

## Complicated vs. Complex

This is NOT Complicated . . .

It IS Complex . . .

**There is a Big Difference!**

## Your Challenge is Definable

Homelessness has  $S^3$  . .

- Scope (who),
- Structure (dimension),
- Scale (numbers).

## The Far Right vs. The Far Left

- ▶ **Unfortunately the issues of homelessness are too often framed in the Far Right vs. Far Left context.**
- ▶ **Different views of the Real Root Causes (Triggers).**
- ▶ **Different views of Solutions (Jail Cells vs. Park Benches).**
- ▶ **Both Extremes Are Wrong > Real Solutions Are in the Middle.**



## The Treat the Real Root Causes (Triggers)

- ▶ 50-60% of individuals have a major mental health issue (includes PTSD Vets).
- ▶ 70-80% of individuals have a substance abuse issue.
- ▶ About 90% of individuals have at least one or both of the above issues.
- ▶ **I did not say lack of food nor did I say loss of housing. These are symptoms of the process of becoming homeless, but are not the root causes.**

*Note: Recreational drug use is not big, too expensive for a homeless person.*

## Recovery vs. Jail Cell Floors and/or Park Benches

**Recovery Does not Occur on a Jail Cell Floor . . .  
nor on a Park Bench.**

**>> Instead Recovery Occurs in 24/7 Programs  
that Address Root Causes (eg mental health,  
substance abuse and domestic violence).**

## Need Customized Treatment

- ▶ **Treatment plans need to be customized for specific individuals.**
- ▶ **A one-size-fits-all treatment approaches do not work.**

## Smart Love

**#1 Goal - Help Folks Graduate from Homelessness Forever by**

**Using “Smart Love” . . . Dignity . . . Respect,**

**Which in Turn Decreases Homelessness.**

## *“7 Guiding Principles of Transformation”*

- ▶ No gimmicks.
  - ▶ No moving the cheese.
  - ▶ No addressing symptoms.
- ▶ **A systems approach of addressing the REAL root causes of homelessness is a very successful and proven way to reduce homelessness.**

## **The “7 Guiding Principles of Transformation” Moving from Enablement to Engagement**

- 1. Move to a Culture of Transformation (vs. the Old Culture of Warehousing).**
2. Co-location and Virtual E-integration of as Many Services as Possible.
3. Must Have a Master Case Management System that is Customize.
4. Reward Positive Behavior.
5. Consequences for Negative Behavior.
6. External Activities Must be Redirected or Stopped.
7. Panhandling Enables the Homeless and Must Be Stopped.

*Developed by Dr. Robert G. Marbut Jr. Spring 2007*

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# Five Strategic Keys

## **There Are Five Strategic Keys to Success – Think “Systems Approach” by Peter Drucker**

- 1- In detail, understand your exact problems (eg scope, structure and scale).**
- 2- Address the real root causes/triggers of homelessness, not symptoms.**
- 3- To get big changes, you must make big changes.**
- 4- Improve/change your service delivery system.**
- 5- Change your community CULTURE from “enabling” to “engaging.”**

## Key 1-

### In Detail, Understand Your Exact Problems

- a- Determining your problems should only take 3-5 months.
- b- Need to know scope (who), structure (dimension) and scale (numbers).
- c- Start by being homeless in order to understand your “flow” and “what is thought about agencies/services.”
- d- Use the HUD PITC (Point-in-Time-Count), but know this often undercounts.
- e- Meet with your agencies and look very closely at their data and census rosters.
- f- Do field studies/observations of street feedings and encampments.
- g- Do grid searches.
- h- If you have data gaps, do street-level surveys.
  - > **Metrics beyond PITC . . . HMIS is more accurate than PITC.**
  - > **Synthesize your data . . . analyze your data.**
  - > **Compare your findings to national results and best practices.**

## Key 2 - Address the Real Root Causes and Triggers of Homelessness, NOT Symptoms

- Focus on practical solutions.
- Do not spend time reinventing the wheel.
- Understanding the different triggers/causes **MUST** inform your recovery approach and decision-making.
- For men, the root cause triggers are **Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Job Retention.**
- For women, the same issues plus **domestic violence and financial hardship connected to divorce or loss of partner.**

## Key 3 -

### To Get Big Changes, You Must Make Big Changes

- ▶ This is so important . . . if you keep doing (more or less) the same things, you will get (more or less) the same results.
- ▶ If you want **BIG improvement** then you must make **BIG changes** in how you are interacting with the homeless community.

## **Key 4 -**

# **Improve/Change Your Service Delivery System**

**Think Peter Drucker . . . Need a Systems Approach:**

- a- Move from being “Agency-Centric” to being “System-Centric.”**
- b- Move from measuring “Out-Puts” to measuring “Out-Comes.”**
- c- Move from “Enabling” to “Engaging.”**



## **Key 5 - Change your Community Culture from “Enabling” to “Engaging”**

- **Need a formal awareness campaign.**
- **Changing culture is more productive than changing ordinances.**
- **Changing community culture will change how agencies are funded.**
- **Changing community culture will change what volunteers and agencies do.**

## Other Issues That Are Controversial

- ▶ **“Dramatically Reducing” vs. “Ending” Homelessness**
- ▶ **“Smart Love” vs. “Tough Love”**
- ▶ **Street-Feeding Programs**
- ▶ **Housing First**

## “Dramatically Reducing” vs. “Ending” Homelessness

- ▶ **President Bush 43 had the “10 Year Plan to End Homelessness”**
- ▶ **President Obama has had his “5 Year Plan to End Homelessness”**
- ▶ **Will the next president have the “2½ Year Plan to End Homelessness”?**
- ▶ **This is crazy talk . . . we should focus instead on realistic ways to dramatically increase street graduation rates and reduce homelessness.**

## “Smart Love” vs. “Tough Love”

- ▶ **“Smart Love” is not “tough love” . . . merge the heart with the brain.**
- ▶ **You can do a lot with DIGNITY and RESPECT to reduce homelessness.**
- ▶ **The best thing you can do for the individual experiencing homelessness is to address the root causes of that individuals’ homelessness . . . do not give things out that placate the symptoms.**
- ▶ **If you work smartly with dignity and respect, you can increase “street graduations” . . . and thus reduce homelessness dramatically.**

## Street-Feeding Programs

- Food, clothing, cash and sun tan lotion do not address the root causes of homelessness.
- More often than not, street-feeding programs enable homelessness.
- More often than not, street-feeding programs do not engage individuals into 24/7 programming.
- The solution is to align and co-locate street-feeding programs with high quality 24/7 programs.
- Every quality program I know of in the USA serves 19-21 meals a week.

## Housing First

- Housing First is one of many tools in your tool-box.
- Scattered site Housing First programs are great for families with single moms.
- Concentrated site Housing First programs are great for combat veterans.
- Housing First “jumps the line” over working-poor.
- Housing First does not address the root causes of homelessness.
- Housing First is VERY expensive, especially for communities with high occupancy rates.
- Housing First does not work well in cities that have high “in-bound” rates of homeless individuals.

# Lebanon Observations

## Similar to USA and Benchmark Communities

- **Male:Female Ratio is 75:25 (survey)**
- **Encampment Ratios of Dogs and Females (observations)**
- **53.8% have a Mental/Behavioral Health Issue (survey)**
- **72.5% have a Substance Abuse Issue (survey)**
- **Lacks housing - - emergency / transitional / long-term (interviews)**
- **Lacks MH/BH and SA/AD treatment beds/slots (interviews)**



## NOT Similar to USA and Benchmark Communities

- ▶ **20% Veteran is very high (survey)**
- ▶ **100% White/Anglo is very high (survey)**
- ▶ **Average Age is 44.9 and Median is 47.0 is low (survey)**
- ▶ **62-75 Individuals are experiencing Street-level Homelessness is very high compared to national average - - a .2% national average would expect about 32 individuals (survey and observations)**

## Lebanon Homelessness is Mostly Homegrown

- ▶ **71.8% Became Homeless After Living in Lebanon**
- ▶ **65.0% Have/Had Family Living in Lebanon/Linn**
- ▶ **65.0% Had a Job in Lebanon/Linn**
- ▶ **51.6% Went to High School in Lebanon/Linn**
- ▶ **45.0% to 52.5% “Grew Up” in Lebanon/Linn**
- ▶ **16.7 Average Years Lived in Lebanon (14.2 when 4 highest/lowest dropped)**

## Other Important Observations

- ▶ **Average years experiencing homelessness 5.6 - - 3.0 years when you remove 4 longest and shortest (survey)**
- ▶ **About ½ of the individuals at Ralston Park are local youth not experiencing homelessness (observations)**
- ▶ **4 Families were experiencing street-level homelessness (observations)**
- ▶ **13 encampments were located (observations)**
- ▶ **Services have developed through “tactical one-off decisions,” and are not coordinated nor strategic in nature . . . there is no common vision (observations)**
- ▶ **Services are often enabling and not engaging (observations)**
- ▶ **There is a very high regard of the LPD by individuals experiencing homelessness (interviews)**

## Immediate Next Steps

### ‣ Strategic - -

- Form Coalition and Get Started
- Develop Strategic Action Steps (Vision -> Strategy -> Tactics)

### ‣ Tactical - -

- Bring in VA for Targeted Help
- Source 1-2 Beds/Slots per Month for BH/MH and AD/SA

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