

What was the least wonderful housing situation you have lived in, and what were your alternatives at the time?

Group Discussion Summary • Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness • 10.20.23

“We are a quilt of approaches and methods to end homelessness. We need to move from ‘intractable,’ to ‘We can do this together.’” — Sally Perkins

Remembering the bad housing we needed at the time ...

- Couch hopping due to DV situation. Had to keep moving as perpetrator found location.
- Lived in a tiny room in Taiwan - sometimes had to forego eating for rent, but still relatively luxurious. Option would have been a school dormitory with about 6 other people.
- Lived in a co-op with about 16 others with shared bathroom and kitchen, but own room with a closing/locking door. Other option would have been a similar, shared housing option or moving in with family.
- Tents in a warzone, improvement was CHU: Contained Housing Unit. Can make 3 units out of a large trailer. Possibly buy surplus off Port or military?
- Lived in houses that were badly partitioned into rental units with shared bathrooms and hot plates and such for cooking.
- Cheap shared collective student housing (“We had an organic garden in the backyard so, how bad could it be.”)
- Talked about vulnerabilities of sharing housing with relatives, etc.
- “Even the hippy version of homelessness, out in the country in a trailer with no electricity and water, was still devastating. The trauma of being unsheltered stays with you.”
- One of the individuals in our group was separated from their father when they were 6 in a shelter, as they were not permitted to stay in the men’s shelter. Lack of consideration for the growing number of dual male or single male households with children.

Issues and Solutions, not necessarily in that order

- Frustration with conditions of people who are even in shelter settings.
- Frustrated with the general situation and lack of empathy. The majority of folks are apathetic about homelessness. There seems to be no real impetus to make systemic changes.
- Need alternative = different shelter model that truly accommodates families. Discussed factors impacting choice as to what housing is preferred. For some (those with TBI, PTSD, and other conditions, living in a tent car is preferred over sharing space with another person. Some people also have issues surrounding shared bathroom/shower issues.

- On a related point, looking at the design of temporary shelters using truck trailers, and repurposing other structures.
- The potential of using dorms on campuses incentivizes universities to offer their campus housing, UPS, PLU, UWT.
- Shared spaces are challenging. Kitchens, laundry, & showers are points of conflict. Many folks choose more space unsheltered or less sheltered over shared housing or congregate shelter out of fear of conflict & feeling vulnerable.

Notes and Resources List

New and Notable

Link to League of Women Voters information on getting involved in Tacoma Comprehensive Planning.

https://lwvtpc.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=843000&module_id=499675

Tough new hospital discharge law for homeless in CA:

https://journals.lww.com/em-news/Fulltext/2019/03000/News__California_Law_Setting_Discharge_Rules_for.1.aspx

Pictures of Hope program press release:

https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_council/city_council_news_releases/city_council_sponsors_pictures_of_hope_program_in_tacoma

Video of speeches at the Stop the Harm press conference at City Hall on October 10 are posted at the Dignity City Instagram: [Instagram.com/dignitycityinsta/](https://www.instagram.com/dignitycityinsta/)

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

Other Upcoming Dates

November 1: Collaboration for a Cause puts resources and services in in one place at one time to help find find stability and quality employment in their own community. Attendees can connect to a variety of services including basic needs, employment, education & training, health, youth, LGBTQ+, veterans, and disability services. We expect over 1,000 people in attendance for this one-day event, coming to the Tacoma Dome on Wednesday, November 1st from 10am-4pm! Registration for a vendor space and sponsorship ends on September 14, with standard vendor registration ending on October 1. Register here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/collaboration-for-a-cause-vendor-registration-registration-685886865077>

November 4 Tacoma Reads Event with David Ambroz and Mayor Victoria Woodard. Link to registration page.

https://tacoma.bibliocommons.com/events/64c82269c0db8d2800c94789?_gl=1*1c5c4hj*_ga*Mjk3MjYyMjU0LjE2OTY2MTI0MzI.*_ga_FKNVC3J3FG*MTY5NjYxMjQzMi4xLjEuMTY5NjYxMjQzMi4wLjAuMA..*_ga_G99DMMNG39*MTY5NjYxMjQzMi4xLjEuMTY5NjYxMjQzMi4wLjAuMA..

Early 2024: Un-conference on Housing Options for 0-30% AMI Residents. Organized by Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness.

Ongoing Resources and Needs

Free Food & Resources Market, Saturdays, 10-12 AM, 4819 S 12th Tacoma WA. everyone welcome. You can pick up food for others.

Free wound care clinic every Friday afternoon, TNE clinic at the STD room at T-PCHD on S 37th & Pacific. Spread the word.

Covid is still here.

<https://www.tpchd.org/healthy-people/provider-resources/homelessness-providers-toolkit>

Safe Sites

<https://ss4a.pchomeless.org>

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

Please sign up to the inclement weather listserv at

<https://www.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>

WA State Bedbug Info:

<https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/pests/bedbugs#:~:text=Adult%20bed%20bugs%20are%20about,swell%20and%20become%20bright%20red.>

Pierce County Covid Dashboard

<https://www.tpchd.org/healthy-people/diseases/covid-19/pierce-county-cases>