

Community Building and Network Development Between the Unhoused Community, Service Providers, and Housed Neighborhoods



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MPA Capstone

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The Institute for Policy Research and Engagement (IPRE) is a research center affiliated with the School of Planning, Public Policy, and Management at the University of Oregon. It is an interdisciplinary organization that assists Oregon communities by providing planning and technical assistance to help solve local issues and improve the quality of life for Oregon residents. The role of IPRE is to link the skills, expertise, and innovation of higher education with the transportation, economic development, and environmental needs of communities and regions in the State of Oregon, thereby providing service to Oregon and learning opportunities to the students involved.

About the UO – Lane County Policy Lab

The University of Oregon's School of Planning, Public Policy and Management and the government of Lane County started a partnership in 2018 to provide applied learning experiences for students, applied research settings for faculty and staff, and technical assistance to the Lane County government. In 2019 the Willamette National Forest was the second partner to join to OPL for long-term engagement.

This project was funded in part by the UO – Lane County Policy Lab.

Land Acknowledgement

The University of Oregon is located on Kalapuya Ilihi, the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, descendants are citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians of Oregon, and continue to make important contributions in their communities, at UO, and across the land we now refer to as Oregon.

IPRE operations and projects take place at various locations in Oregon, and wishes to acknowledge and express our respect for the traditional homelands of all of the indigenous people of Oregon. This includes the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Coquille Indian Tribe, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and the Klamath Tribes. We also express our respect for all other displaced Indigenous peoples who call Oregon home.

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Executive Summary

Objectives

This research project is the result of a partnership between the City of Eugene and the University of Oregon's School of Planning, Public Policy, and Management. The first objective of this project was to identify best practices for peer support models, specifically for the unhoused community in Eugene. In order to achieve this, we interviewed currently unhoused individuals and organizations that serve the unhoused community in Eugene. Our objective was to provide research findings and recommendations on peer support best practices for the unhoused community to the City of Eugene and service providers. As the project progressed, our research expanded to include other opportunities to increase the daily stability of unhoused individuals outside of the scope of a peer support network.

Methodology

We first conducted a literature review, in order to learn more about peer model success from professional studies. We reviewed 22 articles on peer support and found 13 common themes in the research. Some of these themes include specific demographic considerations, empowerment, and mental health. One important note from our literature review is that trust was not a major theme in these articles. However, trust was a major theme that came up later in our interviews. We suggest that this is a gap in the current literature.

In order to determine which services were already available in the area, we conducted structured interviews. These interviews included two main groups of people: people currently unhoused and service providers. We conducted 23 total interviews and spoke with 18 service providers and 11 unhoused individuals. We accomplished this through a mix of in-person, video, and phone calls. After our interviews, we compiled our answers into one main data set. Our team then coded the data set to find 10 unique code themes, later described in our findings section.

We had two major limitations to our data collection. The first limitation was the COVID-19 shelter in place order. Due to social distancing, we were not able to speak with as many unhoused individuals as we would have liked. The second limitation was an overrepresentation of youth because we spoke to more youth-based service providers than other types of providers. We were only able to conduct phone interviews after March 1st, also due to social distancing, and youth-based providers were more responsive to our interview requests.

Findings

After conducting all of our interviews, each transcript was analyzed to identify major topics and themes. 10 unique code themes were found and placed under the four main questions:

1. Who is being served?
2. What services are being provided?
3. How are the services being provided?
4. Where are the gaps and challenges?

Additional themes identified under each topic were coded for prevalence in each interview. All main topics and unique code themes are identified in Appendix C.

Trust and Peer Support

Our research found the themes of peer support and trust came up the most often in our interviews. Peer support was mentioned 188 times in our 23 interviews, which was expected because each interviewee was asked about peer support specifically. We found there are existing peer support networks in Eugene, however, there are a lot of issues surrounding this type of service. One issue that came up, is that some providers will not use the term “peer” when referring to employees, because it often leads to lower pay. The second issue is that there is not enough trust in services for non-organic peer networks to be supported in Eugene.

Trust was mentioned 71 times in our interviews. These organic mentions were generally centered around the fact that there is a lack of trust amongst unhoused individuals, as well as a lack of trust between unhoused individuals and service providers. One of our interviews mentioned that a reason for this widespread distrust in the system is “multi-generational trauma and a lot of multi-generational system fatigue” (Interviewee 12, personal communication, April 10th, 2020). Identifying trust as an essential element to the success of peer support directed our team to begin determining whether sufficient levels of trust were already present among people in Eugene who are currently unhoused. During our research, it became clear that a self-sustaining peer network for Eugene’s unhoused community is not a realistic goal at this time.

Recommendations

Based on our analysis and the information we’ve collected over the past months, our team developed three main areas of recommendations for the City to consider. Those are peer support, stakeholder collaboration, and small camp networks. Each of these recommendations focuses on addressing barriers that limit trust in the community. We believe trust is a primary aspect of providing services in Lane County and could illustrate a gap in the existing literature on peer support for unhoused individuals. The following information and recommendations provide the City of Eugene with the framework to initiate new opportunities to increase daily stability of the unhoused community, in addition to simultaneously building the foundation necessary for a successful peer support network by:

1. Providing the space, support, and guidance to empower themselves, as well as, feel empowered to support others, through Drop-in Peer Support at the future Whitaker Resource Center.
2. Hosting communal events to provide the unhoused and housed communities with positive points of connection to build trust, and opportunities for the unhoused to educate the housed community.
3. Increasing the prevalence of small, facilitated, community-oriented camps to improve the trust and connection between the housed and unhoused communities.

Once open, the Whitaker Resource Center has the opportunity to be a welcoming space that connects service providers to those in need and provides those who are unhoused with a friendly gathering place to relax and build friendships.

Introduction

Every year Lane County conducts an annual Point-In-Time (PIT) count to assess the number of people currently unhoused. The results of the 2019 PIT revealed that 2,165 people were currently unhoused in Lane County, representing a 32% increase from 2018 (City of Eugene, 2019). As housing cost and housing insecurity rise, Lane County and the City of Eugene are actively working to identify causes and develop more effective, widespread services for people experiencing housing insecurity and those who are unhoused. In January 2020 the City of Eugene began a six-month partnership with the University of Oregon’s School of Policy, Planning, and Public Management (PPPM) to investigate possible opportunities to increase the daily stability of currently unhoused residents.

In this partnership, PPPM graduate students:

- Identified best practices of peer support models for at-risk communities, specifically the unhoused community when possible, through an academic literature review.
- Interviewed public, private, and non-profit organizations in Oregon that provide services to the unhoused community to identify service gaps and areas of improvement in Eugene.
- Interviewed people who are currently unhoused residing within Eugene to gain knowledge on how they satisfy their day to day needs and identify ways to aid and stabilize access to these resources.
- Presented research findings and recommendations to the City of Eugene and local service providers.

Peer support programs have become increasingly common over the past decade due to their widespread success across the spectrum of healthcare. More people than ever are seeking assistance through peer support (Tang, 2013). Peer support roles and relationships occur in many different forms. Some are informal and develop naturally, while others have a formal structure and organization. The one thing all peer support relationships have in common is that participants have lived through a similar experience. No matter the structure, peer support roles develop “based on the belief that people who have faced, endured, and overcome adversity can offer useful support, encouragement, hope, and perhaps mentorship to others facing similar situations” (Davidson et al., 2006). Best practices around peer support networks currently utilize a variety of models, which include professionally-led groups with a peer exchange; interactive peer-led programs; peer coaches (also defined as mentors, buddies, or advisors); web, telephone, or e-mail based programs; and peer-led support groups for individuals to share common experiences, situations, problems or conditions (Peers for Progress, 2020). It is important to note the experience shared between participants is often viewed as negative or challenging. Depending on the circumstances, the development of a high level of trust may be crucial to the participant’s success. For the purposes of this paper, the shared experience among participants receiving peer support is having lived experience being unhoused. Due to the nature of this shared experience,

trust among those participating is the essential foundation upon which a robust peer network can be built.

Identifying trust as an essential element to the success of peer support directed our team to begin by determining whether sufficient levels of trust were already present among people in Eugene who are currently unhoused. During our research, it became clear that a self-sustaining peer network for Eugene's unhoused community is not a realistic goal at this time.

Our research revealed that unhoused individuals rarely trust each other, service providers, or the housed community. One Interviewee noted,

“An element of that [trust], that you got to like, interpret, realize, and really bring to the table is that like, just as much as they don't trust each other- they don't trust you as a social worker, or as an interviewer as someone who's gonna portray them in a way that's accurate. Because that's not the way we treat our unhouse population.”

(Interviewee 27, personal communication, April 17, 2020)

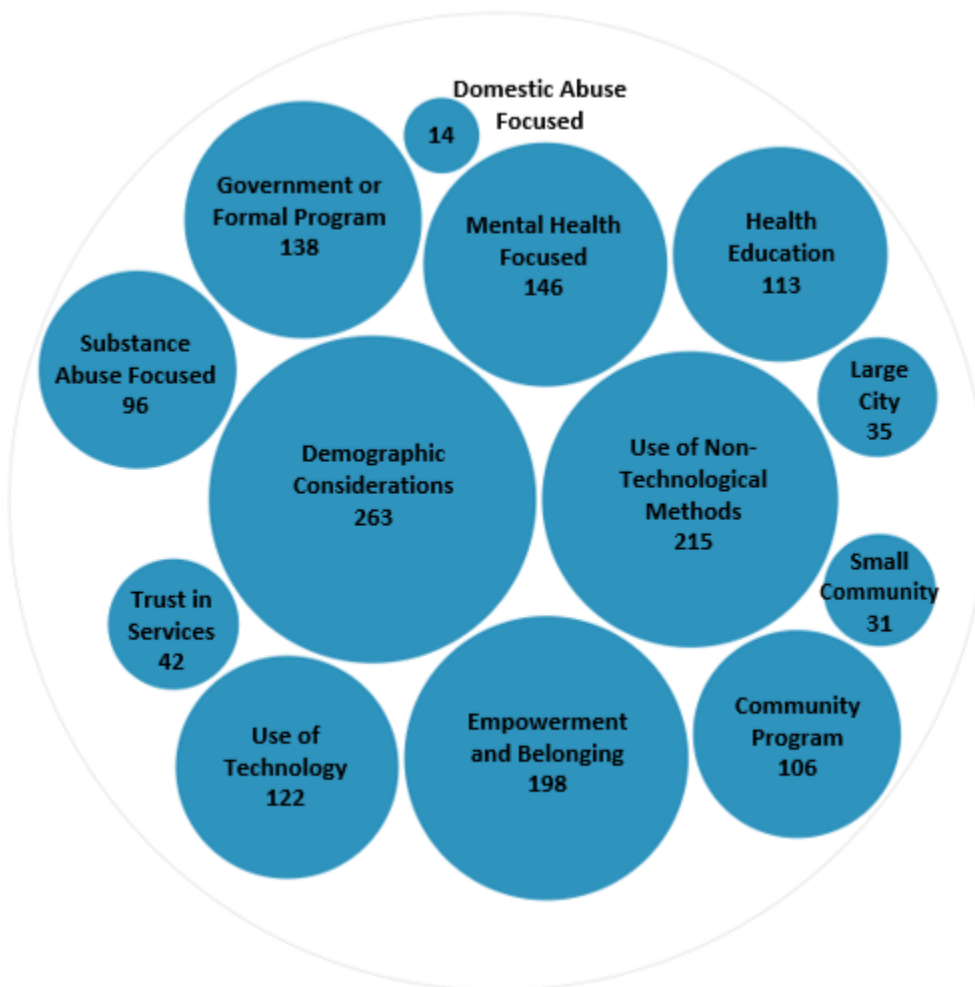
A wide variety of factors contribute to challenges surrounding building trust within and between these communities such as extremely limited resources and high rates of theft. The limited amount of resources such as food, shelter, access to laundry, coupled with limited funding for service providers, forces service providers to choose who has access based on behavior. Interviews with unhoused individuals and with service providers make it very clear that such a network would require a level of trust not currently found in Eugene. We will discuss this barrier further in our findings section.

Although we believe a self-sustaining peer network for unhoused individuals is not feasible at this time, the following information and recommendations provide the City of Eugene with ways to build the foundation of trust necessary to successfully set up a formal, self-sustaining peer network in the future.

Literature Review

Our team wanted to first understand what makes a peer support network successful. We looked at articles and recent research to find recurring best practices that are present in current peer support networks. We read 22 articles or reports published in multiple academic journals to inform our review. All articles included in this review are available in our reference list. We came up with 10 themes after reading reports from the City of Eugene, and then added three more after reading the research articles. **Figure 1**, below, shows all themes with numbers representing how often they were mentioned in the articles.

Figure 1: Main Themes Identified in the Literature Review



Target Specific Users

The most mentioned theme throughout our literature review was demographic considerations. This means the majority of programs took considerations to target a specific service user, such as: youth, veterans, unhoused individuals, or those experiencing mental illness. This suggests a targeted peer support program may be more successful than something generalized to a larger community. Examples of programs that take demographic considerations from our literature review include peer support groups for veterans, employing peer support specialists for the unhoused, and youth mental health interventions using social media or electronic support groups. All of these programs are offered to very specific groups of people and are not generalized, which may help to inform potential peer support models in Eugene.

Use Non-Technological Methods

Demographic considerations were followed by the use of non-technological methods, empowerment and belonging, mental health-focused services, and government or formally run programming. These themes were positively represented in the literature and could have the potential to further inform peer support models in Lane County. Non-technological methods typically include in-person peer support groups, traditional case management, peer-assisted case management, and peer education or skills training. These methods are found more frequently than technological methods to provide support. Barriers to technological methods that emerged were access to the internet or to a cell phone. This potentially makes non-technological peer support more accessible for the unhoused community.

Include Empowerment and Belonging

Empowerment and belonging were also mentioned as important aspects of services in the literature reviewed. The most effective ways to develop a sense of empowerment and belonging included: building social networks, providing stability through supportive housing, and developing empathy through community participation in programs. The concept of empowerment through peer education emerged through these programs. This may help to inform what types of peer support programs could be most successful in Lane County and who the primary stakeholders should be (providers, agencies, peers).

Peer health education programs for the unhoused community brought peer educators and those living on the street together to share health information and increase self-empowerment through six to eight sessions (Connor et al., 1999). According to pre and post-participation surveys, the goals of this program were met through a significant focus on developing a street resource sheet, which included information related to finding services.

Out of the 22 articles, we analyzed 13 positively focused on mental health services. This may suggest that peer support programs for the unhoused community should include options for mental health access or resources. Mental health services were most often accessed through in-person peer support groups that took place over several weeks or months. The services offered focus on improving the quality of life for participating individuals, as well as, improving socialization and relationships between participating individuals and others in the community. Other aspects of programs could include substance abuse or domestic abuse resources, but these were mentioned less often in

the review. Through socialization interventions with individuals experiencing mental illness, one project was able to increase engagement results with four out of six unhoused individuals who did not previously respond to service outreach.

Trust

The concept of trust in services did not appear frequently in this literature review, with only 42 mentions in all articles our team reviewed. This suggests that trust in services may not be an important aspect of peer support programs for the unhoused community, or that it is not addressed through these programs. Articles that did mention trust primarily viewed it as a positive concept that is important to program participants as a community value. This is shown below through an excerpt from an in-person peer support addiction intervention.

“The values the participants found important included trust, respect, honesty, openness, helpfulness, leadership, integrity, willingness and sobriety. The common goals identified by the participants included: share experiences, give hope, lead by example, and teach others.”

(Boisvert et al., 2008)

A meta-analysis of peer support reviewed by our team noted that peers were especially able to develop trust and rapport specifically with unhoused populations. This is because of the shared experiences that give peers the ability to empathize, understand, and provide specific forms of social support to other unhoused individuals (Barker & Maguire, 2017). This review also noted the lack of literature surrounding trust in peer support programs specifically in the unhoused community and recommended this as an area of potential future research.

In our conversations with service providers, trust was a regularly mentioned overarching challenge and a barrier to reaching unhoused individuals, as well as a challenge between unhoused individuals themselves. Although this contradicts our review of existing articles, we believe trust is a primary aspect of providing services in the City of Eugene and could illustrate a gap in the existing literature on peer support for unhoused individuals.

Methodology

Data Collection

Our data collection process focused on interviewing two main groups of people: people currently unhoused and people who are directly involved with providing services to those unhoused individuals in Oregon. We refer to this group as service providers. Our research team conducted 23 interviews, with 18 service providers and 11 people currently unhoused. **Figure 2**, below, details the interviewed service providers. Two of our interviews with people currently unhoused were group interviews and three were one on one interviews, conducted by phone or over instant messenger. All interviews with service providers were solo interviews conducted by phone, Zoom video meeting software, or over instant messenger.

Figure 2: Organizations Interviewed

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS	OTHER ORGANIZATIONS
Carry It Forward	Eugene Police Department
HIV Alliance	MAPLE Microdevelopment*
Community Outreach Through Radical Empowerment (CORE)	Neighborhood Anarchist Collective
Community Sharing Program	Pacific Source Health Plans
Emerald Village	
Hosea Youth Services	
Looking Glass	
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Multnomah*	
Occupy Eugene	
ShelterCare	
Siuslaw Outreach Services	
St. Vincent De Paul	
Westside Community Church	
White Bird	

[* Indicate providers outside of Lane County]

We developed question guides for both service providers and people currently unhoused, which ensured consistency in the questions that interviewees were asked. **See Appendix A** for Question Guides used in interviews with both Service Providers and People Currently Unhoused.

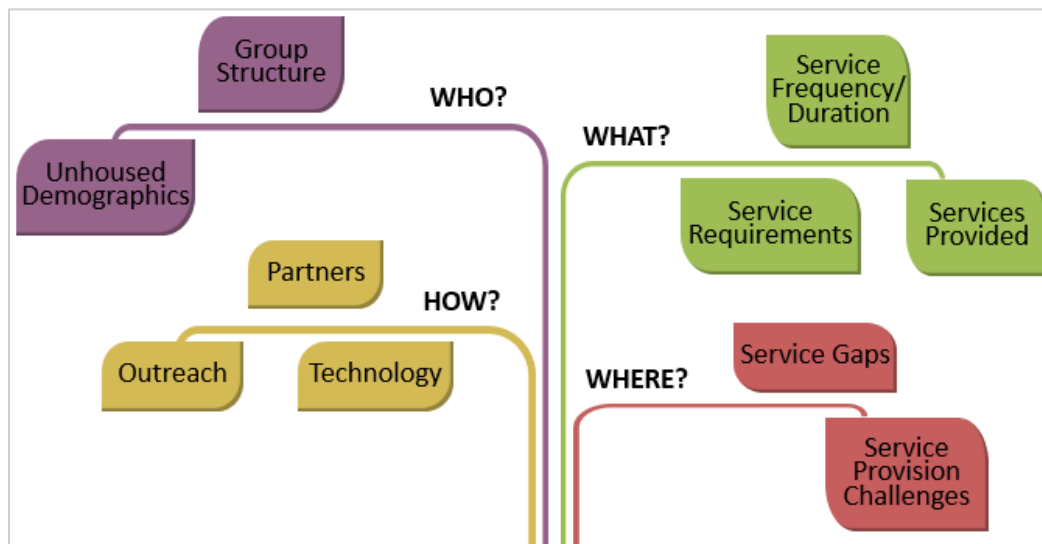
Method of Analysis

All recordings of our interviews were transcribed through the transcription software Otter.ai and checked by the interviewer for accuracy. The interview transcripts were then re-labeled as a reference number for tracking purposes. Detailed notes of the interview were provided for the data synthesis in cases where recording quality was not sufficient for transcription. Two members of our research team, who were not the original interviewers, analyzed the interview transcripts and notes. This reduced bias in the data analysis as the team members who analyzed the data had no background knowledge of the conversations that were transcribed. Additionally, to make sure that the two team members analyzing the data were finding similar themes without bias, they first reviewed all transcripts independently. The researchers then came together to discuss recurring questions, themes, and concepts, which they then went back and identified in the transcripts together. The themes were tracked by annotating the transcripts line-by-line and then entering the tracking results into a spreadsheet. Once all data was recorded, the team reviewed the raw data and found the data trends below.

Findings

We identified 10 recurring code topics in the analysis of the interview transcript data. These topics each had multiple subthemes. The raw data report can be seen in **Appendix C**. We broke our data into four questions, shown below in **Figure 3**, which we used to find common topics. We paired themes together to answer these questions and synthesized the data in this way.

Figure 3: The Four Questions

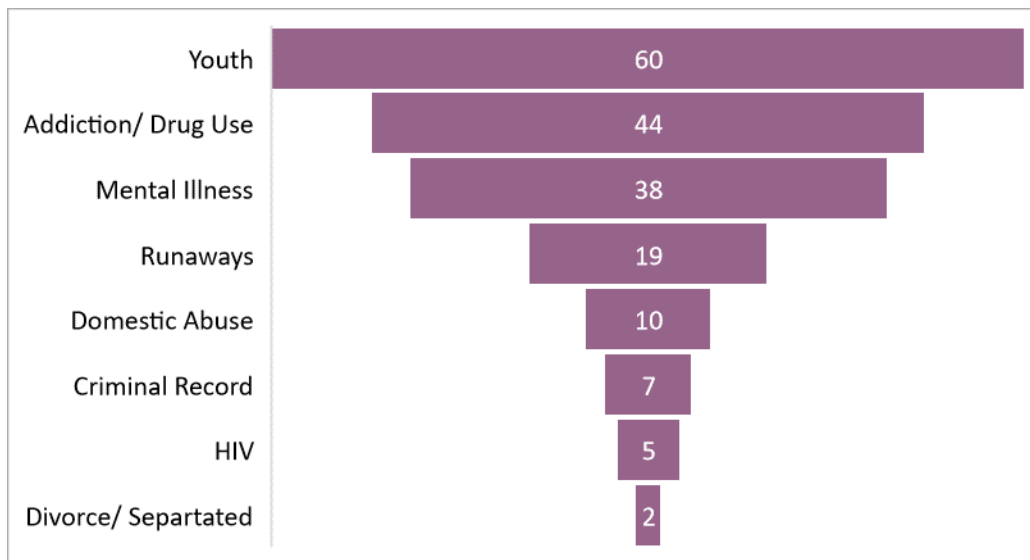


1. Who is Being Served?

In determining which type of people are using a service, we wanted to know more about them than that they are chronically homeless. The U.S. Department of Housing and

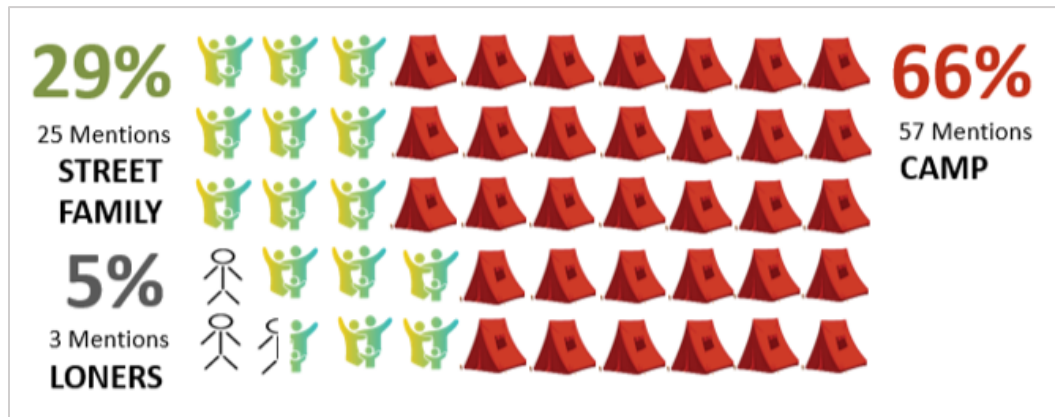
Urban Development (2020) defines chronically homeless individuals as “an individual with a disability who has been continuously homeless for one year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years where the combined length of time homeless on those occasions is at least 12 months” (pg. 2). We were not confident that all of our interviewees would match the criteria of this definition and felt that this term did not tell us enough about the people being served. To solve this issue, we categorized service users by Unhoused Factors, which describe the demographic into which frequent service users fall. This allowed us to focus on why the service users were chronically homeless, and therefore why they are still using services, rather than working toward becoming housed. **Figure 4** provides a visual breakdown of the eight identified Unhoused Factors and the total number of mentions.

Figure 4: Unhoused Factors Themes



Identifying the topic Group Structure helped us to categorize the type of living situation that unhoused individuals utilize. We found that most unhoused individuals are living in camps and/or groups that they refer to as street families. A camp refers to an area where unhoused individuals live together outside. Street families are a group of unhoused individuals who travel, or camp together and often feel a strong bond or responsibility to one another. Street families are often referred to when describing other trusted unhoused individuals that the interviewee relies on for day to day survival. Loners, a group only mentioned three times, are unhoused individuals who do not travel with a street family or stay with a small camp group. They were identified to us, in our interviews, by service providers and other unhoused individuals. A visualization of the three themes identified under the topic Group Structure and the total number of mentions can be seen in **Figure 5** below.

Figure 5: Group Structures Themes



2. What Services are Being Provided?

Our team wanted to discover which services were already being provided in the area, in order to later determine where service gaps exist, and ways to increase service provision efficiency. Through our interviews, we found that most of the services were focused on providing material needs, such as tents, clothing, and hygiene supplies. Temporary shelter and medical/mental health services are also prevalent themes in our data, which suggests most services in the Eugene area are focused on short term solutions.

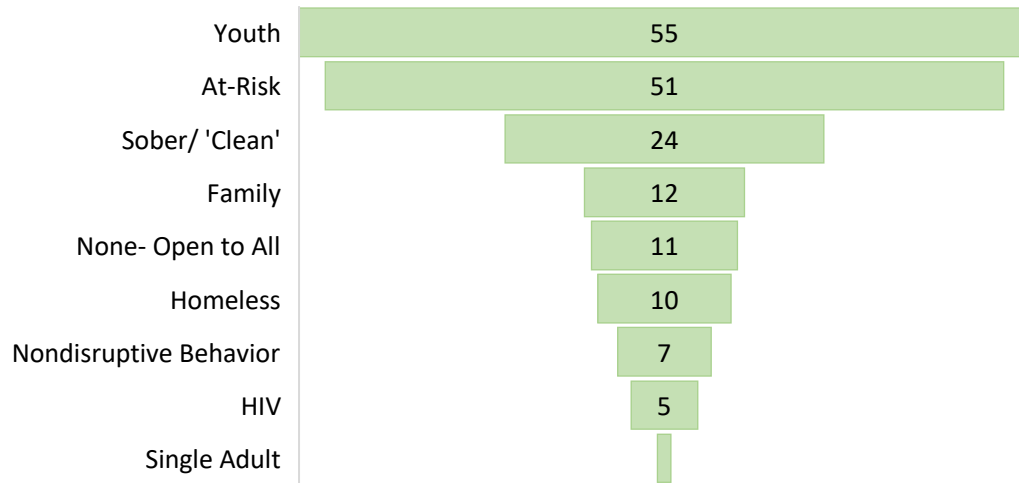
We also wanted to know how often services should be provided, in order to be the most effective. We found that services were the most successful when both service providers and recipients interacted on a walk-in or drop-in basis. This data showed that experience with the services was most positive when they were available without an appointment. Interviewee 16 talks about their experience with this below:

“... we like to be very low barrier ... our support groups are drop-in during the week, that doesn't mean you have to come next week. You can come in whenever you choose to. We're not going to be angry with you if you miss or if you decide that the group isn't for you after all. You know we're not gonna be mad at you or let down. You know, we love to see you, but you kind of do what works for you.”

(Interviewee 16, personal communication, April 13, 2020).

Many services in Eugene have specific requirements, such as age or sobriety, to receive service. Youth or people experiencing housing insecurity who are “At-Risk” were the most frequent requirements mentioned. The theme at-risk includes anyone who is at-risk of being harmed or unhoused, as well as, anyone who is or has experienced domestic abuse, food, and housing insecurity, or identifies as LGBTQ. **Figure 6** provides a visual breakdown of the nine identified Service Requirements and the total number each theme was mentioned.

Figure 6: Service Requirements Themes



From this data, we were able to determine that unless the organization was youth or sobriety specific, most other services were open to anyone in need. One barrier to a peer support program that is currently taking place was described as,

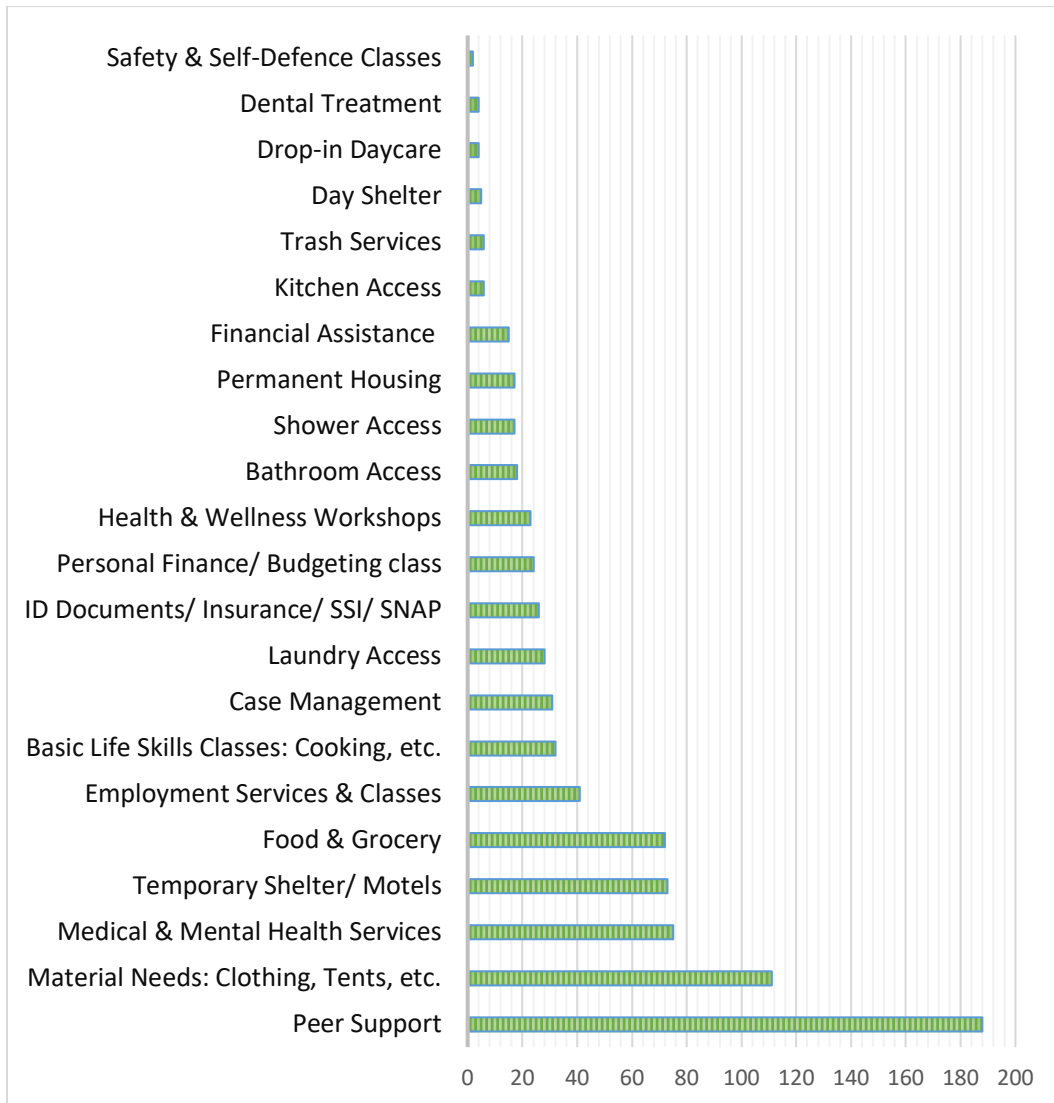
While most interviewees mentioned their desire for peer support in the community, it is not prevalent within formal services provided at this time. The topic Services Provided had the largest number of subthemes, with 22 different Services. These services were

“They have a young adult homeless shelter and it's never full. Why is that? Because there's so many barriers to getting into their programs. And like, therefore, they're not really meeting the needs of the population. They're deserving of various specific, specific slice of the pie.”

(Interviewee 27, personal communication, April 17, 2020)

identified in interviews with providers as services currently offered or by unhoused individuals as services they are using or would be interested in using. **Figure 7**, presented on the following page, provides a visualization of the 22 Services Provided and the total each theme was mentioned to give context for the current diversity in this area.

Figure 7: Services Provided Themes



Trust and Peer Support

Our research found the themes of peer support and trust came up the most often in our interviews. Peer support was mentioned 188 times in our 23 interviews, which was expected because each interviewee was asked about peer support specifically. We found that there are existing peer support networks in Eugene, however, there are a lot of issues surrounding this type of service. One issue that came up, is that some providers will not use the term “peer” when referring to employees, because it often leads to lower pay. The second issue is that there is not enough trust in services for non-organic peer networks to be supported in Eugene.

Our second major theme, trust, was mentioned 71 times in our interviews. These organic mentions were generally centered around the fact that there is a lack of trust amongst unhoused individuals, as well as a lack of trust between unhoused individuals and service providers. “Getting down to like what the key element that we need in Eugene, if you’re

talking about homeless people don't trust each other and they don't trust us, you know” (Interviewee 27, personal communication, April 17, 2020). Identifying trust as an essential element to the success of peer support directed our team to begin determining whether sufficient levels of trust were already present among people in Eugene who are currently unhoused. During our research, it became clear that a self-sustaining peer network for Eugene’s unhoused community is not a realistic goal at this time.

3. How are Services Being Provided?

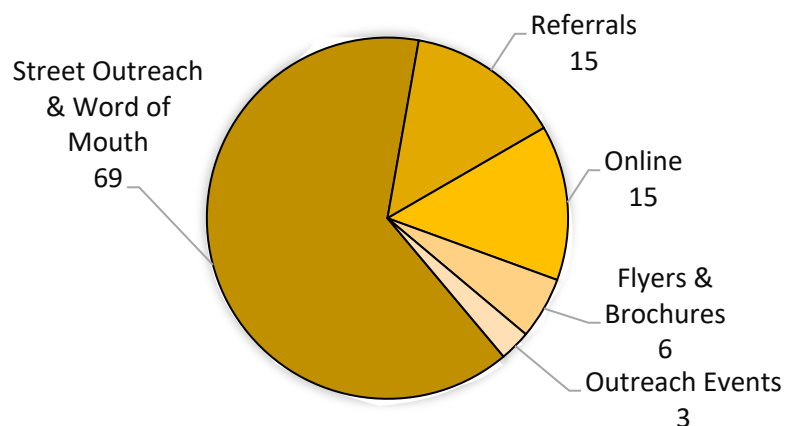
In trying to gain an understanding of how services get in touch with people with lived experience, technology came up as an ever-present factor. Although we found many unhoused individuals have access to cell phones, we also discovered many require internet access to use them, creating a large barrier for most, as described below by Interviewee 9:

“There's something that's going to be lost there by doing it by phone. There's a lot of things that you can address through the phone, I mean, one of those things would be for a victim to start feeling safe and secure needs that physical interaction, that face to face, you know? Seeing that look on that face of empathy and understanding, you can't get that with a phone or a text. So, there is that concern that that's going to be lost.”

(Interviewee 9, personal communication, March 31, 2020)

This theme was important because the majority of the unhoused individuals we spoke to specified that they will not access services unless the services were directly offered to them. We asked both service providers and users which outreach options worked best for them, and street outreach was by far the most successful. **Figure 8** shows the forms of Client Outreach and the number of mentions of each form throughout our interviews.

Figure 8: Client Outreach Themes



The second most successful Client Outreach option was referrals by community partners. This topic also reveals which types of service providers people who are unhoused use. The most frequent providers mentioned were nonprofit organizations, followed closely by local government partners. Local government partners include mentions of the City, County, Department of Human Services, and Police Department. This information helps identify service gaps and opportunities for growth in potential, underutilized partnerships.

4. Where are the Service Gaps and Challenges?

The most discussed challenge to providing services that were mentioned by both service providers and users was funding. The second most frequently mentioned challenge was trauma and diversity-informed care. In reference to accepting services, Interviewee 27 describes the differences in accepting services on the most basic level.

This theme showed that many services were too specific and did not provide enough flexibility in care. Either the trauma-informed care services were specific to only certain

“Just because we think we’re doing what people want doesn’t mean it’s what people want or how they want it...everyone’s going to be different ... and they’re all going to accept the [food] differently.”

(Interviewee 27, personal communication, April 27, 2020)

types of users or they did not go far enough in helping service users deal with the type of trauma they had experienced. For example, some services provide peer support groups for veterans with PTSD. However, some users could not find peer support groups that fit their needs.

Along with finding sticking points, our research also aimed to find gaps in service that

“There’s not one size fits all... not everybody is going to be happy or do well in a huge, overcrowded, low-income apartment complex. What we really need in society is to look at how to make more options for folks, so that people can find a situation that works for them...”

(Interviewee 16, personal communication, April 13, 2020)

could potentially be filled by the City of Eugene. The most frequently mentioned gaps in services were opportunities for self-worth and temporary shelter. Unhoused individuals specifically pointed out that there is not enough temporary shelter in the Eugene area. This theme reveals that unhoused individuals are asking for a variety of ‘housing’ options, including outdoor, untraditional options such as specified spaces to legally camp.

Limitations

COVID-19

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, our team had planned to interview more people who are currently unhoused. Our hope was to build a relationship over several interactions to establish a level of trust with interviewees. We were unable to conduct as many interviews with people who are unhoused as we had originally planned because of social distancing orders. Instead, we worked with service providers to connect us remotely to unhoused individuals, via Zoom or phone. We also used instant messaging through Facebook and YouTube to connect with people who are or had previously been unhoused. Although COVID-19 social distancing restrictions altered our ability to interview unhoused individuals, we focused our data collection on interviewing individuals providing services to the unhoused community.

Over Representation of Youth

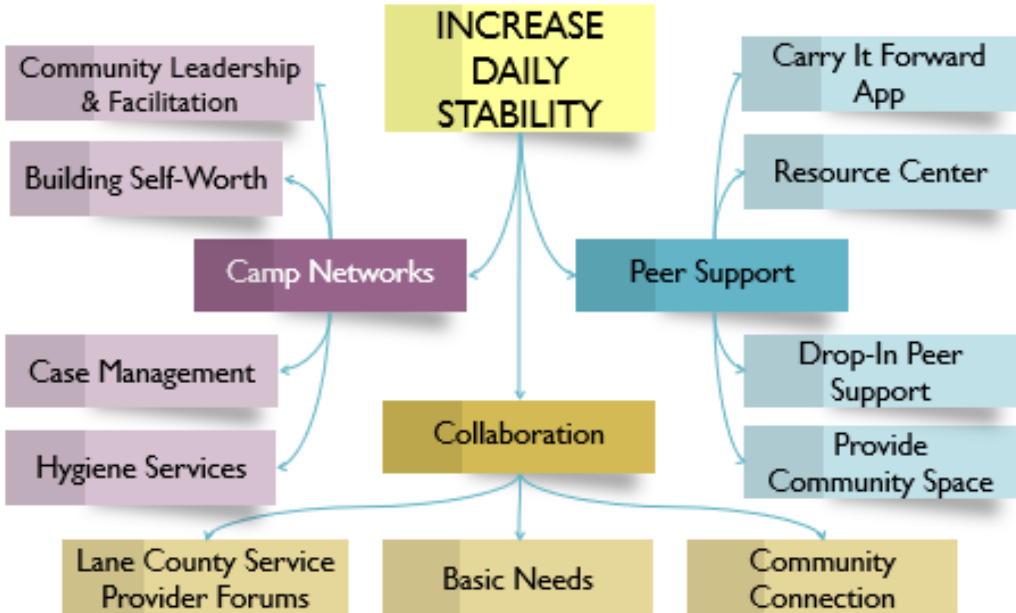
Appendix C includes the main topics and their subsequent themes and lists the total number of times each code is mentioned by all interviewees. Youth is a highly prevalent factor in our research because the majority of the service providers interviewed were youth-based organizations. This is due in large part to the availability of service providers that we could reach during our data collection period. This proved to be a limitation to the type of data collected because we interviewed more youth-based services than any other service.

Recommendations

While some unhoused individuals are working to build trust between themselves and other unhoused individuals, as well as with service providers, existing barriers make progress challenging. Barriers mentioned included: the burden of moving one’s belongings, lack of access to physical gathering space, system fatigue, and constant movement to avoid police action. These barriers and more will be addressed in greater detail throughout our recommendations section.

Based on the results of our research, our team developed three recommendation areas for the City of Eugene to consider. Each of the recommendation areas focuses on addressing different barriers identified as inhibiting trust-building. The primary recommendations are (1) peer support, (2) stakeholder collaboration, and (3) small camp network development. The following section breaks down each of these recommendations into actionable suggestions and outlines potential barriers to implementation that should be taken into consideration. **Figure 9** provides a detailed overview of our recommendations broken into categories.

Figure 9: Recommendation Summary



Recommendation 1: Peer Support

The goal of our research was to identify ways the City could take action that would result in increased daily stability for those unhoused individuals in Eugene. Our team believes that Eugene would benefit from a peer support network that is largely self-sustaining, but before such a network is built certain barriers need to be addressed.

“It's the community involvement in support of the program. It's the community reactions, it's the police reactions, it's funders reactions, and you know, the county or the city or the political reaction. That are the limiting factors to these programs succeeding, it's not the model. And it's not the participants 'cause like the participants are clearly benefiting from it. So, you know, getting down to like what the key element that we need in Eugene, if you're talking about homeless people don't trust each other and they don't trust us, you know.”

(Interviewee 27, personal communication, April 17, 2020)

Our interviews pointed to a lack of trust as the primary reason why a peer network would not be successful now. Lack of trust was pervasive not only among unhoused individuals but also among service providers. In order to increase trust throughout these groups, we have included recommendations that would help foster trust in our community.

1. Complete the Carry It Forward App

In 2019, Carry It Forward was selected by the Hack for a Cause Challenge. The Hack for a Cause Challenge allows programmers to dedicate one weekend of marathon programming to help selected nonprofits with the building of an app of their design. A group of programmers worked with Carry it Forward to develop a mobile app that would allow people currently unhoused to create a profile, similar to a Facebook profile, to share in the app. The profile includes information about their story, their skills, and lists their five greatest needs. Once the profile was published, users could choose to barter, trade, or donate things with other app users. App users would be able to provide their name or a QR code associated with their account to people interested in connecting. Carry it Forward views the app as a way for the entire community to connect and build connections between all residents of Eugene. The app would provide a safe space for people to donate to unhoused individuals, instead of forcing unhoused individuals to fly a sign asking for spare change or a blanket. The app would also provide a platform for skills trading and sweat equity bartering. Overall, the app could serve as the foundation for building a robust peer network system. Unfortunately, the app concept proved to be more than a team of programmers could tackle in one weekend, and the app remains unfinished. We recommend that the City of Eugene look into working with Carry It Forward to finish the app and begin formalizing a partnership to manage this peer resource sharing platform.

2. Build Organic Network Through the Resource Center

Although completing the Carry It Forward app would provide a framework for a peer network to work within, it does not address the issue of trust directly. We learned that in-person peer connection is essential for unhoused individuals to begin to build trust. While the app would allow unhoused individuals to connect virtually, the app does not specifically focus on in-person connection. The City of Eugene recently announced having successfully secured funding for a new resource center, located in the Whitaker Neighborhood, and focused on helping the unhoused population. To promote trust-building and in-person peer support, we recommend that the City of Eugene look into the most effective ways to encourage connection through the new Whitaker Resource Center. We recommend the Whitaker Resource Center focus on providing drop-in peer support and a physical gathering place for the unhoused community and service providers. These concepts are detailed in the following sections.

The City can provide the foundation for a peer network by building a resource center that is inviting and encourages in-person relationship building. This will make the Carry It Forward app a more robust peer network platform in the future. Based on information gathered during interviews, we recommend the City consider providing two essential services out of the new Resource Center: Drop-In Peer Support and Physical Space.

A. Drop-In Peer Support

Drop-in peer support would allow trained support specialists with lived experience to work with people who are currently unhoused. These specialists would serve as a sounding board for unhoused individuals working to navigate the various resources available in Eugene. These individuals would be essential in fighting system fatigue and would be a sympathetic person to talk with during challenging times.

"I kind of say that it's like mountain climbing expedition, where you have a case manager who's gonna stand at the bottom of the mountain with you and explain, like all the gear and what the gears for, teach you how to tie the knot. They might connect you to, like an REI class or something where you can learn how to mountain climb and peer support will come along and actually put on the gear with you, climb it with you and they've already climbed the mountain so they know all of the pitfalls that somebody can fall into. So they'll show people, here's how I did it. I put my hand here and my foot here. And they kind of do that kind of thing with the client when they're through everything."

(Interviewee 28, personal communication, April 22, 2020)

Support specialists would serve as a guide for unhoused individuals as they navigate the system and will reduce system fatigue. System fatigue was a sub-theme mentioned by

interviewees, which regularly led to individuals becoming unwilling to seek services. One service provider said,

"We try tried all the churches. We have a lead on one of them that might let us use their space if we pay them. But other than that we're short on space."

(Interviewee 27, personal communication, April 17, 2020)

"I think that one of our jobs as folks who are serving youth [and the unhoused] is to help them navigate system fatigue, and I know that's not a specific service. But I think that a lot of our regulars, a lot of our the folks that we see in general, have all experienced it to some degree, whether it's them individually, or their families have experienced it, that the system has let them down."

(Interviewee 12, personal communication, April 2, 2020)

Many of our interviews with unhoused individuals mentioned that the foundation of support is built by people with lived experience as an unhoused individual because they know how to work with service providers to get what they need. The City will be able to increase the number of individuals willing to seek services if current or formerly unhoused individuals serve as system navigators.

B. Provide Physical Space

We recommend that the planned Whitaker Resource Center focuses on promoting gathering space for service providers and unhoused individuals. The need for gathering space was mentioned by 26 out of 28 Interviewees. For this recommendation, space

"...there's a couple of other groups in town they're doing other efforts for the homeless, and they don't have a space to work out of, they're kind of bouncing from church to church."

(Interviewee 9, personal communication, March 31, 2020)

refers to an area for organizations to host events and an area for unhoused individuals to gather, socialize, and barter. First, we will address the need for event space. Throughout the City, those who are providing services to the unhoused community are struggling to find gathering space. One interview revealed,

During our interviews, providers mentioned the challenges they face in securing a large enough space to host events such as Share Fair. Service providers discussed the challenges of finding organizations that are willing to rent space for an event focused on bringing together a large group of unhoused individuals. Service providers reported that when a welcoming space is found they generally spend anywhere from \$50 to \$250 to rent space for an event only lasting a few hours. While the cost generally did not prevent organizations from hosting events, it did reduce funds available to provide services to the

unhoused community. It became apparent throughout our interviews that partnering with churches can be challenging and cost-prohibitive for organizations.

A solution to this would be for the Resource Center to allow organizations to reserve space at no cost in order to host events for the unhoused community. The City would then be able to connect more individuals to needed services and build working relationships with organizations providing services to the unhoused community.

In addition to providing space for service providers, we recommend the Whitaker Resource Center create space for unhoused individuals to gather during the day. This would be an area similar to the neighborhood coffee shop where people gather for connection. By providing a welcoming space that encourages people to sit and visit, the City will be aiding in building trust among the unhoused community. One interview revealed that prioritizing welcoming space resulted in many of their clients, who are considered regulars, coming in daily to use the area as a place to just hang. Providing space for the unhoused community to gather and connect is essential for trust-building and service provision effectiveness.

In addition to providing space for gathering, we recommend that the Resource Center encourage bartering between people who are currently unhoused. Interviews revealed that unhoused individuals have concerns related to bartering legally. One interviewee mentioned that many unhoused individuals believe bartering is illegal due to the regularity of police intervention in such transactions. Interviewees also mentioned that the police regularly see unhoused individuals gathering to barter and intervene, requiring the individuals to disperse. By providing unhoused individuals with a space to pool and share resources the City will be providing a protected avenue for unhoused individuals to support their community and build connections.

Overall, providing gathering space is essential to connect individuals to resources, to allow individuals to connect with peers, and for people to feel welcome. The Whitaker Resource Center has the opportunity to be a welcoming space that connects service providers to those in need and provides those who are unhoused with a friendly gathering place to relax and build friendships.

C. Barriers to Implementation

We recommend that the City partner with Carry It Forward to finish their peer app and use the Whitaker Resource Center as a space for connection. However, we have identified some barriers in making these recommendations a reality. The first barrier relates to the unknown completion timeline of the Carry It Forward app. Though the application development has begun, it is unclear how much time and money would be required to finish. With those unknown factors, this recommendation may prove to be cost-prohibitive. The second barrier is space availability. Layout plans for the Whitaker Resource Center are not publicly released. Until then, determining if there is enough space for gatherings is not feasible. Additionally, we recognize that providing space to organizations free of charge may prove to be unrealistic. Our research revealed that space sharing was not generally cost-prohibitive to organizations. For more information on the variety of challenges surrounding service provision please reference **Figure B1** in **Appendix B**.

Recommendation 2: Collaboration

We recommend that the City of Eugene pursue greater levels of stakeholder collaboration to better provide services to the unhoused community. This would be done through three methods: reinforcing the Lane County Homeless Service System through annual forums, using partnerships to provide basic needs access to the unhoused community, and hosting community gatherings to build trust among all stakeholders.

1. Establish Stakeholder Forums

The Human Services Division of Lane County currently operates the Homeless Service System, which is a collection of housing and social services offered by 11 agencies in Eugene, Springfield, and the greater county area. This collection of services was last updated in January of 2017. Our team recommends updating the Homeless Service System and connecting participating agencies and nonprofit organizations through annual or quarterly forums. These forums would serve to identify service overlaps, gaps, and ways to improve quality of services offered to the unhoused community. Representatives of each agency, nonprofit or partner would attend to help identify these overlaps, gaps, or challenges facing the unhoused community in Lane County. Spaces to hold these in-person events may include the Convention Center or Wheeler Pavilion. The forums could also be used to coordinate the implementation of the recommendations from the March 2018 Public Shelter Feasibility Study, conducted by the Technical Assistance Collaborative Inc. (TAC). These recommendations include expanding street outreach through organizational coordination, expanding diversion and rapid exit strategies, and expanding rapid rehousing. Our research revealed that several community organizations would like to see greater levels of collaboration and partnership to better serve the unhoused community.

Based on our interviews, we recommend increasing the level of collaboration and partnerships in Lane County through the Homeless Service System. Initial goals could include familiarizing all organizations through an introductory forum and later working on the current recommendations from the TAC Public Shelter Feasibility Study. By building on the Homeless Service System as an existing umbrella structure, we believe there is an opportunity to efficiently connect a greater number of organizations that provide front-line services to the unhoused community. Other informal organizational partnerships mentioned in our interviews included schools and private businesses, which may be areas of expansion through updating the Homeless Service System.

2. Use Partnerships to Address Service Gaps

“I would love to see a lot more collaboration and a lot less, like, organizations throwing each other under the bus.”

(Interviewee 26, personal communication, April 20, 2020)

“... the intensive case management. And we know the population, we know that homelessness in and of itself is a trauma inducing experience and so a lot of our families really can, or currently do benefit from mental health services as well as coaching on housing stability, so how to budget, how to pay their rent on time, how to maintain the cleanliness and housekeeping of an apartment unit, and how to access other resources in the community like childcare, and how to increase their great potential. So doing things like resume building workshop, helping families with job searches and job applications and interviewing skills, and then helping people improve upon their skills and beefing up their resume.”

(Interviewee 13, personal communication, April 3, 2020)

3. We recommend connecting service providers and nonprofit organizations to provide basic needs and services for the unhoused community. Through our conversations with service providers and individuals with lived experience, the most prevalent basic needs gaps that were discussed included access to community education and skills training (workshops and classes) and transportation (bus vouchers, getting to necessary appointments). The quote below contextualizes the basic needs challenges of unhoused individuals outside of receiving housing first: Peer Skills-Training

Interviews with service providers revealed that skills-learning sessions are effective at encouraging self-sufficiency and providing valuable knowledge to unhoused individuals. These training opportunities currently include employment, budgeting, and housing topics. These courses are offered with the option of multiple sessions to unhoused individuals. These could be expanded in the future to include a “How to Be Homeless” course utilizing peer support. Grants and funding opportunities exist to offer these types of courses and to provide incentives to encourage individual participation. These incentives include vouchers, gift certificates, or gift cards to Goodwill. These trainings are typically held in the service agency or various churches in the area. The quote on the following page discusses some of these services.

“Currently, there's a homeless 24% recidivism rate that are coming through the homeless system returning back to homelessness within the first six months of security housing. Which indicates to us that there's other services that they need to be taken advantage of outside of just housing.”

(Interviewee 13, personal communication, April 3, 2020)

One service provided offering these courses currently has an 80 percent success rate with individuals who take their employment courses. It is important to note that

incentives to participate, such as vouchers and gift certificates, were provided to individuals in these courses. We believe a similar framework could be successful in other organizations or through the City of Eugene, potentially through the expansion of the Homeless Service Network we are recommending. This would be an opportunity to serve individuals with the desired community education as well as bringing organizations together.

4. Mobility

Mobility is a constant challenge for the unhoused community in Lane County. In our interviews with unhoused individuals we heard about the high frequency of bike theft, which creates challenges to accessing services or getting around. Bus vouchers are available for public transportation, but there is a limited supply. When this is coupled

“So creating opportunities for them to, like you said, to get interface with other community members and become valued and seen for who they are and what they can offer and then being affirmed, and that seems to be the magic elixir so far.”

(Interviewee 8, personal communication, April 15, 2020)

with the negative experiences that individuals have had when using public transportation, interviewees reported that public transportation was not a viable option for mobility. Unhoused individuals report experiencing being kicked off the bus or not allowed on at all by bus drivers in Eugene.

5. Furthermore, the individuals may not be allowed to bring their belongings on public transportation. These challenges mean individuals have to get around on foot making it difficult to get to appointments, case management services, or workshops. Without bikes or the bus, people often travel multiple miles per day on foot, which can take up to four hours a day, to accomplish basic tasks, such as dropping bottles off at a bottle drop site or charging devices at the library. Organize Community Gatherings

Another opportunity to connect nonprofits and agencies while providing a safe space for unhoused people is to host community gatherings, such as barbecues, service opportunities, and community engagement events. Spaces to host these events could include the downtown Park Blocks at 8th and Oak Street in Eugene and park spaces. Through our conversations, we found organizations such as Burrito Brigade, Food for Lane County, and Food Not Bombs already collaborate by providing food and supplies to the unhoused community, with all supplies and food primarily donated by local restaurants, farms, businesses, and grocery stores in the area.

We recommend the City facilitate community events with these partners to provide food, local musicians to provide entertainment, and caseworkers to provide a point of connection between the housed and unhoused communities. Trust and community safety were identified as two challenges to providing services that emerged in our research. By providing a physical space for housed and unhoused groups to come

together, trust can begin to form. Alongside trust, community activities can support relationship building and the development of self-worth for unhoused individuals.

One such example of community building opportunities we found in our research was a local organization that currently facilitates a steady group of unhoused individuals in Lane County. This unhoused group was formalized by a partnership between the organizational leadership along with the Neighborhood Business Association and a Eugene Community Outreach Officer. Prior to the official meeting, the organization received community pushback and complaints on the phone from neighborhood residents and businesses.

This group of unhoused individuals now regularly engages in service projects with local businesses, such as cleaning up dumpsters, alleyways, and the pavement in front of businesses, and laying mulch in planters. The businesses also began to invest in porta-potties for the group to assist with hygiene and decreasing human waste in the neighborhood.

Engaging multiple stakeholders through more of these opportunities can result in benefits such as relationship building between housed and unhoused individuals, developing a sense of self-worth in the unhoused community, and a change in the perception of overall safety in the neighborhood.

6. Barriers to Implementation

We recommend that Lane County should update, expand, and connect the organizations in the Homeless Service System through quarterly or annual forums. While this update would be beneficial in reducing the overlap of services, we recognize that resources such as time, staffing, and necessary materials for service expansion are in high demand. It is unknown whether local service providers and agencies have the infrastructure needed for greater outreach. Furthermore, coordinating the Homeless Service System structure and in-person forums may take time, funding, and relationship-building between multiple organizations. Through our conversations with service providers and people currently unhoused, we know trust is key in order for individuals to receive services and is one of the largest challenges faced by providers. We recommend the City use free spaces and

“Geico started bringing subway breakfast sandwiches once or twice a week to the guys. When we did the huge barcodes project, we got five and a half yards of mulch, delivered and spread Geico paid for the mulch. So it's true community neighborhood partnership that's occurring and these unlikely cats are at the center of it right like who would have thought they would be the galvanizing agent, but they are, I firmly believe that's because people will get behind something that has victory and momentum... these guys are the unlikely heroes of change in the neighborhood.”

(Interviewee 8, personal communication, April 15, 2020)

connect with more organizations, such as Burrito Brigade, Food for Lane County, and

“... if we're going to allow people to camp, we have to create a structure that makes sense so that they can camp in a helpful way and we need to have areas that are, you know, that are safe for encampments, where there are some things like outhouses and garbage pickup. You know, so that people can actually have some infrastructure... This is where I live... I have trash service. You know, we don't have that right now...”

(Interviewee 16, personal communication, April 13, 2020)

Food Not Bombs, to facilitate events that bring housed and unhoused communities together. We recognize that participation may be a barrier to the success of stakeholder collaboration, and we recommend providing incentives such as vouchers to encourage participation in these events and activities. By bringing organizations, housed individuals, and the unhoused community together we believe the City can help build trust between all stakeholders and deliver more effective service provision. For more information on the variety of challenges surrounding service provision please reference **Figure B1** in **Appendix B**.

Recommendation 3: Small Camp Networks

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed many things about our society, including the provision of services to the unhoused community. During this pandemic, the City has allowed for the sanctioning of small camps for unhoused people. While these camps have not been without challenges, overall, the small camps have proven to be successful community structures. We recommend that the City continue to provide space for and sanction small camps for groups up to 12 individuals. The overarching goal of our research was to provide the unhoused community with more stability in their daily lives. By allowing people who are currently unhoused a place to safely camp without fear of being swept by the police or robbed in their sleep, the City would increase stability for those in camps dramatically.

By providing unhoused individuals with a place to camp with others in similar situations, the City is tackling many of the issues related to the unhoused community. One major issue with the unhoused community in Eugene is the community's perceptions of individuals moving all their belongings around. Although removing the negative optics is a benefit to sanctioned camps, tackling optics is only one small benefit. The small camps allow for greater stability in daily life for campers through community building and self-worth building, as well as more effective case management and improved hygiene.

1. Natural Network Development

Small camps allow community building between the people staying at the camps, the permanently housed community/ neighborhood where the camps are located, and those who provide services to these camps. Community building is the first step in developing trust amongst campers. Community building is something that is challenging to achieve in larger camps but has been successful in smaller groups. When asked to talk about the

community-building potential of small camps, one interviewee said; “But it's, it's nicer to have it on a small scale, if you know what I mean. Because if you have 32 people's problems to deal with on a day to day basis” (Interviewee 1, Feb. 25, 2020). While all groups of people will have their differences, smaller camps have fewer differences to deal with, generally resulting in more stability for all participants. With the goal of stability in mind, we recommend only considering small camps as this will reduce the amount of potential chaos within the camp and allow for strong trust-building among participants.

Throughout our research, interviewees mentioned the importance of street families. These small group camps help provide structure to the naturally occurring street families and allow for the group to work as a team or family would. Our findings show that allowing small groups to camp together can lead to an increased sense of community. Having a family-type group structure to rely on increases the stability of each participating member's life and provides them with trusted individuals to rely on. Having a community allows unhoused individuals to sleep more soundly, to share valuable resources, and to have the freedom to move without the burden of bringing their belongings without the fear of theft. By increasing the prevalence of small group structures, the City will increase the daily stability of the unhoused community, while also improving the trust and connection between the housed and unhoused communities.

2. Community Leadership and Facilitation

While it is wonderful that when provided the physical space to form community unhoused individuals do build strong community ties, we do not recommend doing without outside oversight or facilitation. Our research suggests that oversight should not come from the City or even from an existing service provider, but from the community at large. By allowing community members to become invested in the small camps, the City would be building connections between the housed and unhoused communities. Every unhoused individual mentioned this type of relationship-building. To facilitate community investment in helping those currently unhoused, we recommend looking to the community for leadership.

We recommend looking to the community organizations to find small camp leaders based on information gathered during interviews. While we have no specific recommendation for small camp leaders, interviews revealed community leaders have expressed interest in participating in such an effort. We recommend connecting with community organizations through existing leaders who regularly participate in helping those unhoused individuals. We believe that through these leaders the City will be able to identify individuals who would be willing to take on the role of camp leader. We believe it is essential that the small camps are not religiously based, in order to prevent barriers to participating in the camp. The key to any individual selected to oversee a camp is finding an individual who will show respect to the campers and will help provide structure with limited service barriers. Each camp structure will be determined by the campers and the camp leader jointly and will likely vary by camp.

In one group that is already successfully operating in the South Eugene area, the service provider overseeing the camp spoke to the factors contributing to the camp's success, stating,

The service provider also talked about the importance of the structure provided to the campers from service requirements. To become and remain a member of the South Eugene camp, each individual must check in with the service provider weekly, and each member must sign and obey the community contract. The contract includes rules of engagement, behavior expectations, and requirements for community volunteer work. This camp has been together for about a year now and has been performing community service weekly, as described below:

“... work two to three hours every Saturday and to be meeting every Tuesday. They don't do those things. They're off the porch. And lo and behold what has happened is, as they've done work in the neighborhood, and are part of something, their self-worth is growing. And they're taking ownership over their stake in the neighborhood and the neighborhood itself.”

(Interviewee 8, personal communication, April 15, 2020)

Community service is a crucial aspect of our small camp recommendation that builds trust between all involved. We recommend that when a camp is established the camp leader and campers arrange to meet with local businesses and residents to discuss expectations and community service opportunities for the camp. A similar meeting was held during the early days of forming the successful South Eugene camp that proved to be instrumental in the camp's success.

3. Building Self-Worth

We believe community service is an essential element to include in all small camps sanctioned by the City. By requiring a few hours of weekly community service, the camps will not only be able to show the housed community that the unhoused is not a problem to fix but also gives the participants a feeling of self-worth that being unhoused strips from them. One interviewee described the transformation he has personally seen and felt since having the opportunity to have a sanctioned camp with mandatory community service.

“Even with oversight, it has to be a smaller group. I think it is largely relationship-driven. I think the reason that I have these guys are that these guys are willing to go with me on this journey is because we have strong personal relationships. And they respect me and I respect them. And we care for each other.”

(Interviewee 8, personal communication, April 15, 2020)

The amount of understanding and growth apparent in that quote is a testament to the benefits of providing people who are currently unhoused with a small camp to call home and structure to facilitate community building. Another individual from the same camp described their view of the benefit of mandatory community service. During an interview

with several of the campers, one statement had everyone at the table nodding their heads in agreement.

While our research was only able to talk to individuals in the one formally facilitated camp, we believe, based on interviews with service providers and other unhoused individuals, that the desire to replicate and develop similar camp structures is widely present among the unhoused community. We recommend that the City use insights gained from the large fairground camps to begin forming small camp groups. By building on the naturally forming groups present in the fairgrounds COVID-19 camps, the City can find several existing street family units who might like to be involved in a city-sanctioned camp. Working with established street families will increase the level of trust among campers and lead to less chaos within the camp.

4. Case Management

Another advantage of small, City-sanctioned camps is more effective case management. Throughout our interviews, it became apparent that service providers struggle to

“... if they're not at a camp, or they're not somewhere where it's stable, if they're outside, camping frequently, you know, if there is a sweep of the camp that they're staying, and they have to move and find someplace else to stay, so that can be hard for us to track them down.”

(Interviewee 28, personal communication, April 22, 2020)

maintain contact with individuals seeking services. This is due to many factors, but the two most common factors were lack of consistent cell phone access and continuous camp relocation by authorities.

By providing unhoused individuals with a sanctioned camp, the City will help case managers maintain contact with individuals seeking services. With a consistent place to sleep and a community to support them, individuals are much more likely to remain in

“Yea, we actually want to help clean up the community. And I like doing the projects because it you know, it occupies me, it's decent exercise, and it makes me feel good about my position because I'm doing something in order to be able to have a place to stay you know, and not just freeloading, per se, but actually doing a little bit of work in order to have the privilege to be able to sleep here at ... That's why we like to attend to the gardens... Well, you know, charity starts at home. So the more work we do..., the better we feel about being here, because we know that we've, we've been a benefit to this area rather than to disparage it.”

(Interviewee 1, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

contact with caseworkers working them through the system resulting in higher success rates of service provision and increased trust in the system. To help caseworkers maintain contact, we recommend that the community-appointed leader from each camp

have a phone that each camp member can use for case management related communication.

5. Hygiene Services

Access to basic hygiene facilities such as toilets, showers, and laundromats are a daily challenge for the unhoused community. Access to free restrooms is consistently a challenge because businesses charge to use the restroom and close at night. Unhoused individuals in one neighborhood group created a “restroom budget” in order to buy the cheapest item at Subway, a cookie, so that they could use the Subway restroom every day. Some nonprofit organizations provide vouchers for shower facilities; however, these are in much higher demand than currently being supplied. This makes access to the most basic hygiene services difficult for unhoused individuals.

“The laundry and showers, we get we get a lot of requests for. You know, in some respects that's as much of a service to the rest of the community when all these individuals can be clean and so yeah, like I said, we, we spend several thousands in shower and laundry each year.”

(Interviewee 28, personal communication, April 22, 2020)

As our data collection took place during the COVID-19 crisis, Lane County set up two primary sites to support unhoused individuals with a place to sleep, meals, showers, and medical screenings. The two sites in Eugene are at the Lane County Fairgrounds and the Wheeler Pavilion. The Convention Center at the Lane County Fairgrounds is focused on providing services to asymptomatic individuals. While the Wheeler Pavilion is focused on those experiencing signs of illness. Additionally, two local service providers, White Bird and Carry It Forward, are currently managing temporary shelter sites of six tents housing up to 10 people. These shelter sites are supported with hygiene stations (porta-potties and handwashing stations), food, basic supplies, and welfare checks. This is an example of how nonprofits, local businesses, and private organizations may already have the capacity to provide basic hygiene access and can effectively collaborate to provide outreach and services to the unhoused community.

We propose providing each camp with a porta-potty and a hand wash station modeled on the emergency response to COVID-19. This will eliminate the human waste problem that many businesses and community members complain about. Based on information from existing camps, we recommend that these sanitation stations be locked to prevent outside visitor use. In an existing camp, each camp member is given a porta-potty key upon joining the community. Additionally, the camp requires the campers to clean the porta-potty weekly before the company that services the unit. This has helped the camp maintain a good relationship with the porta-potty company and provides the campers with a feeling of ownership.

In addition to a porta-potty and hand washing station, we recommend the City work to arrange trash service for the camp modeled on the emergency response to COVID-19. Without proper trash disposal service, small camps will likely become overrun with trash and become a health hazard and an eyesore for the community. Adding the camp to a weekly trash route or providing a dumpster service is essential to the success of any sized camp.

While we recommend prioritizing a porta-potty, handwashing station, and trash service, our research also discovered a need for laundry service. In half of the service provider interviews, interviewees mentioned the need for laundry service. Our research revealed that there is a service gap related to laundry services for those unhoused individuals in Eugene. We recommend partnering with the Laundry Unicorns and local laundry-mats to formulate a plan for each camp to have access to laundry services.

6. Barriers to Implementation

The first barrier relates to funding. As is true with every project securing funding to keep these camps up and running can be challenging. We suggest the City works to analyze the cost-saving potential of providing the unhoused community with areas to camp. This will likely reduce costs associated with police sweeps of camps, as well as cleanup of trash and human waste throughout the City. Funding directed to the City on an emergency basis has allowed the City to provide hygiene services and space for unhoused individuals to camp. We recommend using these funds to begin establishing additional small camps.

The barrier of space is a real concern with this recommendation. By using the community organizations and nonprofit partners, the City can begin to identify empty lots throughout Eugene that can serve as the location for small camps. While tackling the space barrier through community connections, the City can start to identify individuals who will serve as camp leaders. Identifying land and camp leaders will take time but combining resources is a way to reduce this barrier. For more information on the variety of challenges surrounding service provision please reference **Figure B1** in **Appendix B**.

“So, we have a laundromat here in town that we work with and they have three shower stalls in their laundromat that they can go in. And she does a reduced rate for us as well. So normally for someone to do a load of laundry, it's about you know, \$9.50 for both drying and washing. And she chose \$7.50 and she has not raised her rates with us for the showers in 10 years and so it's been \$3 for the last 10 years for a shower.”

(Interviewee 9, personal communication, March 31, 2020)

Summary of Recommendations

1. Pursue and foster existing methods of peer support in Eugene to address barriers, develop trust, and increase daily stability for the unhoused community.

- A. Eugene nonprofit Carry It Forward started a peer-to-peer app where individuals can list their story, skills, and greatest needs. Housed and unhoused individuals could use the app to trade, donate, and barter for goods such as blankets or needed services. Due to lack of funding, the app remains unfinished. This should be funded as soon as possible to build community connections and peer-to-peer support in Eugene.
- B. The City should use the new Resource Center in the Whitaker neighborhood to build an organic network and foundation for peer-to-peer networks in Eugene: drop-in peer support and physical space.
 - i. In-person drop-in peer support with trained peer support professionals should be provided to work with individuals experiencing homelessness to assist in navigating resources available to them and to build trust with agencies and service providers.
 - ii. The need for space was a prevalent theme in the interviews we conducted. Use the Resource Center for physical space to host events, connect individuals to services, and provide the unhoused community a place to gather and socialize.
- C. Barriers to implementing these peer-to-peer resources include the unknown amount of time and funding needed to finalize the Carry It Forward app and the unknown amount of space available in the Resource Center which can be devoted to drop-in peer support, events, and social gathering for the unhoused population.

2. Implement three methods of increasing stakeholder collaboration in Eugene to develop trust within the unhoused community.

- A. Establish Stakeholder Forums
 - i. We recommend the City of Eugene update and expand the existing Homeless Service System to connect participating agencies and nonprofit organizations through annual or quarterly forums. These forums would serve to identify service overlaps, gaps, and ways to improve quality of services offered to the unhoused community.
- B. Address Basic Needs Through Partnerships

- ii. We recommend connecting service providers and nonprofit organizations to provide basic needs and services for the unhoused community. This could be facilitated through the Homeless Service System to address the largest needs gaps of skills training, community education, and transportation barriers.

7. Provide Community Opportunities to Build Trust

- iii. Connecting organizations through community opportunities such as barbecues, social gatherings, and service events may be an effective avenue to initiate services and build trust between service providers, unhoused individuals, and the housed populations.

8. Barriers to multiple stakeholder collaboration include trust (among unhoused individuals, housed individuals, businesses, and providers). Funding for basic needs, resources, facilitation, and oversight also remain challenges to consider in implementation.

3. Continue and allow for the development of small camps as community structures for the unhoused population in the City.

- A. We recommend moving forward with small camps of up to 12 individuals to increase the community-building and natural network development potential in each individual camp. This would also support trust development in each small camp.
- B. We recommend looking to the community organizations to find camp leaders. These leaders could be found by connecting with community organizations through existing leaders who regularly participate in helping those unhoused individuals.
 - i. Oversight and facilitation of camps may also include a community contract, weekly check-ins with the leadership, rules of engagement, behavior expectations, and requirements for community volunteer work.
 - ii. Mandatory community service is a key aspect and should be included in small camp developments as a way to give unhoused individuals an opportunity to build self-worth and relationships with the housed populations and businesses.
 - iii. By allowing individuals a consistent safe place to sleep and gather, individuals may be more likely to remain in contact with case management and service providers. A phone should be provided in each camp to use for case management related communication.
 - iv. Each small camp should be outfitted with a porta-potty and a hand-wash station, available upon use with keys provided to camp participants, and trash service. This will contribute to community ownership, an improved human waste situation, and less health hazards to the community. Laundry services should also be pursued to ensure basic access to laundry for each camp.

- v. Barriers to developing small camps include continued and regular funding for the camps as well as space needs for each camp. The City should analyze the cost-saving potential of freeing up current trash, hygiene, and police services directed to the unhoused population. Locations for small camps should also be identified by working with the faith-based community and nonprofit partners to overcome these barriers.

Future Research

Our team feels that further research would be best spent in reaching more unhoused individuals. Due to social distancing we were not able to speak to as many unhoused individuals as we would have liked. While our research is largely informed by service provider responses, the data set could be made better by additional perspective from unhoused individuals. An asset-based approach would determine what unhoused individuals already do to build trust and organic peer networks. The theme of “street family”, alone, would provide many avenues for future research.

We also recommend future research in the role of trust in peer support. The new resource center will be the City’s greatest asset in building this trust. Student groups could create a program evaluation of the usefulness of the resource center in peer support, as well as peer support tracking through trust building.

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Appendix A

Potential Interview Questions for Service Providers

1. Talk about the services your organization provides.
2. Do you have requirements for people to receive services?
3. How do you communicate with recipients outside of face to face interaction?
4. What types of community engagement with the unhoused occurs in your organization?
5. Do you believe unhoused individuals are willing to help others who are unhoused?
6. Do you see community building occurring organically within the unhoused population?
7. Do you use peer support in the services you provide?
8. What resources do you feel would be most helpful for those who are unhoused? (aside from reduced housing costs and increased availability)
9. Are you gathering any coordinated entry information?
 - a. Do you gather standardized information on all program participants to understand preferences and housing needs?
 - b. Have you created a standardized referral process that prioritizes those households with the highest needs?
10. What are some considerations or overarching goals you keep in mind when administering programs for the unhoused population?
11. What is one of your biggest challenges when providing services?
12. Based on this interview, is there any other providers you think we should talk to?

Potential Interview Questions for Unhoused Individuals

1. What brought you to Eugene?
2. How do you currently feel about the services provided by the City and by other organizations?
 - a. What was the service?
 - b. Why did you use this service?
 - c. What did you like and/or dislike about it?
 - d. Why did you leave?
 - e. How would you rate it?
 - f. Would you go back?
3. What are the challenges you have faced receiving services?
4. What is your day-to-day like getting resources, such as food, money, or a place to sleep?
5. How do you feel about people who are unhoused helping each other out?
6. What do you think is missing that could help you out?

Appendix B

Figure B1: Challenges to Service Provision and Use

Condition	# of Mentions	For Service Users	For Administrators
Trust	71	Lack of trust of service providers from previous negative experiences	Takes a lot of time and repeated interaction to fully gain trust
Diversity & Trauma	66	Previous personal trauma and negative service experiences	Need to provide trauma informed care training
Denial of Services & Service Requirements	57	Don't meet service requirements/ kicked out/ negative previous experience	Limit barriers/ provide a safe, trusting, welcoming environment
Safety	56	Do not feel safe at resource centers- previously robbed/ beat up by peers or by housed people 'detering the unhoused from their neighborhood'	Providers must feel safe in order to provide effective services
Community Pushback	51	Feelings of worthlessness	Create community education and connection events
Funding	49	No funds for bus ticket or bike	Very limited and competitive
Physical Space	42	Lack transportation access to get to the service site	Finding an available space/ permits/ zoning laws
Waiting Lists	29	Loss of hope during waiting period	Centralize waitlist issues & lack of funding
Service Structure	26	Too structured for individuals used to little structure	Funds generally have restricted uses
Participation	22	Too many barriers to get there- ex: transportation, no safe storage	Getting people to attend, incentivize them
Facilitation	21	Require respect and trust before accepting direction from a facilitator	Finding a trusted facilitator/ providing training and support
Limited Access Hours & Remote Access	21	Not always open in times of need & lack of technology for remote access	Remote access is difficult to provide
Lifestyle Choice	15	Do not desire to be sheltered	Cannot promote choices that create cost to the community
Self-Medicating Drug Use	10	Difficulties scheduling & attending services regularly	Information and service retention is difficult when service users are not sober
Criminal Past	7	Overcoming barriers to services and employment	Background checks, ensuring staff and other service users feel safe

Appendix C

Who is Being Served?

Topic	Theme	Frequency
Unhoused Factor/ Demographic	Youth	60
	Addiction/ Drug Use	44
	Mental Illness	38
	Runaways	19
	Domestic Abuse	10
	Criminal Record	7
	HIV	5
	Divorce/ Separated from partner	2
Group Structure	Camp	57
	Street Family/ Group	25
	Loner	3

How are Services Being Provided?

Topic	Theme	Frequency
Outreach	Street Outreach & Word of Mouth	69
	Referrals	15
	Online	15
	Flyers & Brochures	6
	Outreach Events	3
Technology	Phone (Presence or Call)	54
	Computer access	47
	Facebook	34
	Other Social Media	27
	Text	16
	Face to face	9
	Crisis line	2
Partners	Nonprofits	222
	Local Government	103
	Religious Communities	60
	Businesses	57
	Schools	20
	Federal Government	14

What Services are Being Provided?

Topic	Theme	Frequency
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Services Provided	Peer Support	188
	Material Needs: Clothing, Tents, etc.	111
	Medical & Mental Health Services	75
	Temporary Shelter/motels	73
	Food & Grocery	72
	Employment Services & Classes	41
	Basic Life Skills Classes: Cooking, House Upkeep...	32
	Case Management	31
	Laundry Access	28
	ID Documents/ Insurance/ SSI/ SNAP	26
	Personal Finance/ Budgeting class	24
	Health & Wellness Workshops	23
	Bathroom Access	18
	Shower Access	17
	Permanent Housing	17
	Financial Assistance (Rent, energy, gift cards)	15
	Kitchen Access	6
	Trash Services	6
	Day Shelter	5
	Drop-in Day Care	4
Dental Treatment	4	
Safety & Self Defense classes	2	
Service Frequency/ Duration	Walk-in/ drop in	25
	Weekly	21
	Multiple times a week	11
	2 years	10
	1 year	9
	Monthly	8
	Daily	5
	Multiple times a month	5
	Apply for extension	5
Requirements for Service	Youth	55
	At-Risk	51
	Clean/ sober	24
	Family	12
	Open to ANYONE	11
	Homeless	10
	Nondisruptive Behavior	7

	HIV	5
	Single adult	1

What are the Service Gaps and Challenges?

Topic	Theme	Frequency
Challenges of Service Provision	Trust	71
	Diversity & Trauma	66
	Denial of Services & Service Requirements	57
	Safety	56
	Community Pushback & Approval	51
	Funding	49
	Physical Space	42
	Waiting Lists	29
	Service Structure	26
	Participation	22
	Facilitation	21
	Limited Access Hours & Remote Access	21
	Lifestyle Choice	15
	Self-medicating/ drug use	10
Criminal Past	7	
Services Gaps Identified:	Opportunities to Build Self-Worth	40
	Temporary Shelters	30
	Community Education & Events	26
	Sleep	20
	Access to Hygiene Services	17
	Positive Points of Connection	13
	Legal Camping & Storage Spaces	13
	Affordable Housing	13
	Wrap Around Services	13
	Safe Space to Hangout	10
	Client Driven Plan	8
	Legal Bartering System	6
	Life Path & Goals Exploration Program	5