>> [MUSIC] Hi, you all. I'm Marisa Zapata. This is the podcast where we examine homelessness by talking to researchers and experts, who of course include people who lived the experience of homelessness to understand what we're missing in the headlines and sound bites. In each episode, we will help clear up misconceptions about homelessness and to answer what it would take to prevent and end homelessness in Portland and beyond. Who am I? I'm an Associate Professor of Land-use Planning at Portland State University and Director of PSU's Homelessness Research and Action Collaborative, a research center dedicated to reducing and preventing homelessness where we lift up the experiences and perspectives of people of color. [MUSIC] In this first episode, we clear away some of the rhetoric to identify the key questions that frame this discussion. One of the recurring themes around homelessness, and that is the question about unsheltered population of how do we best serve people who were unsheltered? This is a question that I get all the time and it is usually gauged in this question of how do we solve homelessness? I find myself spending a lot of time trying to explain to people, well, we can try to solve homelessness, and/or we can think about how to best support people while they're living on the street or experiencing homelessness. Those aren't actually quite the same questions. We know, regardless of the circumstances someone finds themselves in, the best way to end homelessness is through housing. Oftentimes, there is some kind of support service that comes with that, that maybe an addition to what the average person might need to stay in and access their housing. That's what we know. When you ask some place I could join office of homeless services, what they're doing to serve people who are experiencing homelessness, the answer is and should be that they're trying to create enough affordable housing for people to move into with the necessary services to fit the needs of those particular people. Now, for a lot of reasons and many that I don't fully understand, producing, or acquiring, or maintaining, or making a fillable housing, is not fast. I think that's a really important question that has a whole another nuance to it that we can easily look past. There's also the question of how do we create the services to help people, particularly people who have been living outside or living with homelessness for a long time? How do we help them get into and to be able to stay in their housing? It's not just simple as we might like to think it is. That is one set of questions, the production of housing and appropriate services to help people. The next question becomes; if we want to accept that housing and services are taking time to come online, what do we do in the face of people who are suffering? In particular, how do we deal with the fact that there are people suffering whom we can see? Again, a lot of times when people are asking me about homelessness, they are asking me about the people that they can see living on the streets and the people who are attracting their attention on the streets. Those tend to be people who have some behavior that is getting your attention, because it's unusual, abnormal in your mind, sticking out in your mind. So people will come to me and say; "Well, why don't we just make a bunch of tiny home villages? Why don't we just make a bunch of emergency shelters? Why can't we use [inaudible] to put people into housing to recover?" The reality is that all of those solutions may work for some people. None of those solutions will work for everyone. Even more complicated, is that the solutions all cost money and take time. These particular set of solutions that I've just mentioned, may or may not actually serve the people who are gathering your attention the most because almost anything in which we are investing in right now, requires some rules. Most of our emergency shelters are temporary and right now, a number them are going to have a hard time functioning in COVID for disease spread. But even there, you have a

number of them that have rules or regulations that aren't going to work for the people that you might be paying the most attention to. So we break down this conversation even more. We have a question of; "What should we invest in to help people who are suffering on the streets?" It's not going to be a single solution and it is not going to be cheap to do it well. Then we have to deal with the fact that we might be looking at spending a lot of money to making people comfortable, while we're also waiting for affordable housing to come online. Then we're left with a question of; "Do we want to continue to accept affordable housing coming online in a slower rate or there things that we might sacrifice or change or spend more on to make it happen faster, and/or are we willing or wanting to spend more on services to support people who were unsheltered and what should those services be?" I'm going to be interviewing people to help fill in the gaps of knowledge around all of these complicated questions. There's some people who have lots of thoughts and experiences in these topic areas, [MUSIC] to help you hold more information about what we can do as we move forward as a community on campuses. [MUSIC].