

**Myth #1**

“Camps are responsible for all the trash cluttering public land.”

About two-thirds of illegal waste cleaned up by Metro came from businesses or people living in homes who have garbage service

[-Metro Dashboard](#)

**Myth #2**

“People experiencing homelessness are flocking to Portland for the services.”

Only 18% of those living unsheltered report coming to Multnomah County for services. Family or friends were the most popular reasons.

[-Multnomah County's 2019 Point in Time Count](#)

**Myth #3**

“It’s the opioid epidemic and mental illness.”

Only 17% report a serious mental illness and 15% report a substance use disorder. The rates are higher for those living unsheltered. Studies show that housing helps improve recovery rates for both.

[-2020 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development report](#)

**Myth #4**

“You can see the scope of the homelessness problem by the number of tents in the city.”

About half of those experiencing homelessness sleep at shelters or transitional housing. That doesn’t include those living doubled up with friends and family, which means the issue is larger than what you see.

-Multnomah County's 2019 Point in Time Count

**Myth #5**

“The county has invested millions into the homelessness crisis with nothing to show for it.”

From July 2020 through June 2021, more than 11,000 people previously experiencing homelessness were served in permanent housing in Multnomah County , and nearly 27,000 people at risk of homelessness were kept in their home

[-A Home for Everyone 2021 2021 Q4 Report](#)

**Myth #6**

“The West Coast faces higher rates of homelessness due to their lax laws”

The West Coast faces one of the largest affordable housing shortages in the country.

-2018 Gap Report from the National Low Income Housing Coalition

**Myth #7**

“There are plenty of shelter beds available for those who sleep on the streets.”

There are enough year-round, emergency beds to serve fewer than half of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Oregon.

- [2019 report by Technical Assistance Collaborative](#)

**Myth #8**

“Providing services makes the problem worse.”

If we do nothing to fix systemic problems including access to affordable housing, the rate of homelessness will continue to climb.

-2018 report by ECONorthwest

**Myth #9**

“People of color are less likely to experience homelessness.”

African Americans are twice as likely and Native Americans are five times as likely to experience homelessness.

-Multnomah County's 2019 Point in Time Count

**Myth #10**

“University students don't experience homelessness.”

One in seven university students experience homelessness.

-2021 College and University Basic Needs Insecurity: A National #RealCollege Survey

**Myth #11**

“They just need to get a job.”

A job doesn't protect you from homelessness. Approximately 75% of low-income households in the Portland area pay more than half of their income on rent, putting them at extreme risk of homelessness.

-The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Rental Housing by the National Low Income Housing Coalition

**Myth #12**

"Homelessness is difficult to predict."

Economists use housing affordability to predict the severity of homelessness. One formula shows a 10% increase in rent leads to a 6.5% increase in the rate of homelessness.

-Economists John Quigley and Steven Raphael