WESTERN REGIONAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

WITHOUT HOUSING

DECADES OF FEDERAL HOUSING CUTBACKS

MASSIVE HOMELESSNESS

AND POLICY FAILURES

www.wraphome.org

Campion Foundation

www.wraphome.org
Member Organizations

Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency
Berkeley, CA
www.self-sufficiency.org

Coalition on Homelessness
San Francisco, CA
www.cohsf.org/en/

Los Angeles Community Action Network
Los Angeles, CA
www.cangress.org

Right 2 Survive PDX
Portland, OR
www.right2survive.wordpress.com

Hayward Community Action Network
Hayward, CA
www.southhaywardparish.org

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee
Sacramento, CA
www.sacshoc.org

St. Mary’s Center
Oakland, CA
www.stmaryscenter.org

Sisters Of The Road
Portland, OR
www.sistersoftheroad.org

Street Roots
Portland, OR
www.streetroots.org

Street Spirit
San Francisco, CA
www.thestreetspirit.org

WESTERN REGIONAL ADVOCACY PROJECT: WITHOUT HOUSING
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Overview

1. Historical Context
2. Political & Economic Factors
3. Cuts to Low-Income Housing Programs
4. Homelessness in the U.S.
5. Band-Aid Solutions
6. Federal Funding Priorities
7. What must be done!
Historical Context

Artist: Works Progress Administration
A Tale of Two Acts

Over the last century there have been two episodes of mass homelessness in the United States. Legislation from each era tells the story...
Act I

- The Housing Act of 1937 committed:
  “to remedy the unsafe & unsanitary housing conditions & the acute shortage of decent, safe, & sanitary dwellings for families of lower income...”
• The Quality Housing & Work Responsibility Act of 1998 declared:
  “the Federal Government cannot through its direct action alone provide housing of every American, or even the majority of its citizens.”
Political & Economic Factors

Artist: Roberta Loach
War on the Poor

- Trickle-down economics
- Welfare reform
- Mass imprisonment
- Punitive immigration policies
- Attacks on unions
- Income inequality, job insecurity, & debt
- Privatization of public services

Artist: Art Hazelwood
Housing As Commodity

- Feds turn housing over to private market in the 1970s.
- 261,419 Units of Public Housing lost through sale, demolition & HOPE VI – Estimates including Project based Section 8 well over 360,000.
- Over 5 million foreclosures from 2008 - 2014.
- 13 million vacant housing units in 2013.

Artist: Jos Sances
Cutbacks in Low-Income Housing Programs

The opening of general public emergency shelters in 1983 shows a clear connection between the drop in affordable housing and the birth of modern homelessness. It is the result of the deep cuts shown here. Note the advent of homeless-specific federal assistance in 1987, when the federal government was forced to react to an emergency response to its own failure to maintain a housing safety net. Since that time, Congress has funded HUD homelessness assistance at a miniscule level, while refusing to restore cuts in the larger affordable housing programs.

WRAP
Western Regional Advocacy Project

Artist: Claude Moller
HUD’s budget authority was cut by 77% from 1978 to 1983. As a result, emergency shelters opened nationwide and Public Housing has been decimated.
Rural Housing Cuts

USDA built 38,650 affordable housing units in 1979 & only 763 in 2011 — in 2012 & 2013 the number is 0.
Starving Public Housing

- Over 260,000 units lost through sales, demolition, & HOPE VI program.
- $26 billion in repairs needed due to ongoing capital fund cuts.
- HUD now says only private investment can save public housing.
- New demonstration allows 60,000 units to be mortgaged off.
- Nation’s most permanent form of low-income housing is being lost.
Homelessness in U.S.

Artist: Art Hazelwood
# Race & Homelessness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Estimated % of nation’s total population (from US Census Data 2010)</th>
<th>Estimated % of nation’s homeless population (homeless counts/surveys between 1991 and 2009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>40-56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>4.8% - 0.2%</td>
<td>1-3% - 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>12-15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>3-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>32-39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impacts on Communities

- Families with children are fastest growing group of homeless people.
- Seniors and people with disabilities can be found in shelters and under bridges in many communities.
- Lack of legal status, rights, & public benefits fuels homelessness amongst undocumented immigrants.

Artist: Jos Sances
Band-Aid Solutions

Artist: Art Hazelwood

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The Vicious Cycle of Homeless Policy

- Temporary responses to homelessness that fail to address the systemic causes of homelessness.
- Periodic calls for local homeless plans based on the newest policy.
- Ever-changing policies geared toward fixing different sub-populations of homeless people.
- Stereotypes of homeless people as degenerate.
- Premise that homelessness is caused by the deficiencies of homeless people.

Increased homelessness.
Criminalization of Homelessness / Poverty

At the heart of our Civil Rights work is outreach to homeless and poor people that documents their experiences with local police and private security. We have recently surveyed 1,276 people in five states and twelve cities. There can be no denying that “Broken Windows,” “Quality of Life,” “Civil Sidewalks,” and “Safer Cities” initiatives are anything less than a reincarnation of “Ugly Laws,” “Anti-Okie laws,” “Sundown Towns,” “Bracero Treaty” and “Jim Crow” when you hear directly the voices of those who are the targets of today’s campaigns.

The main “illegal offenses” that homeless people are being targeted with:

* 81% for sleeping, with 50% of these people cited and 30% arrested
* 78% for sitting or lying down, with 43% of these people cited and 26% arrested
* 66% for loitering or hanging out, with 41% of these people cited and 25% arrested

Do you know of places where it is safe and legal for you to sleep outside? * 74% No  
* 26% Yes
Federal Funding Priorities

Artist: Jos Sances
Comparison of Federal Funding Priorities

2013 Dollars (in Billions)

2 VIRGINIA CLASS ATTACK SUBMARINES $4.25
ALL HOMELESS ASSISTANCE GRANTS $1.73
29 F-35 FIGHTERS (JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER) $9.17
ALL PUBLIC HOUSING OPERATING FUND $4.06
4 LITTORAL COMBAT SHIP (LCS) $2.24
ALL PUBLIC HOUSING CAPITAL FUND $2.18

WESTERN REGIONAL ADVOCACY PROJECT: WITHOUT HOUSING
Mortgage Interest Deductions

- **HUD Low/Moderate-Income Housing Assistance**
- **Federal Tax Expenditure Estimates on Home Ownership**

* Includes stimulus funding under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act.
** HUD Estimates
What Must Be Done

Artist: Josh MacPhee

WESTERN REGIONAL ADVOCACY PROJECT: WITHOUT HOUSING
Making Housing A Human Right

• Restore federal housing funding.
• Turn vacant buildings into housing.
• Repeal immigration status as screening criteria for housing assistance.
• End demolitions without replacement and right of return.
• Stop the criminalization of poor people.
Organize Around People

• Build alliances across race, nationality, class, gender, & religion.

• Connect organizing for housing to education, health care, dignified work, immigrant rights, Native People’s sovereignty, & economic security.

• Value mutual humanity.

Artist: Art Hazelwood
Take Action Now

- Connect local organizing with efforts to build a broader social justice movement.
- Speak out for housing as a human right!
- Educate your community!
- Join WRAP!