

National Civil Rights Outreach Fact Sheet



December 4, 2015

Since September 2010, the Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP) and allies in cities across the US started compiling information from homeless people about their daily interactions with local police, private security guards, and the criminal justice system. From September 2010 to May 2011 we have surveyed 336 members of the homeless community that self-identified as mentally ill as phase one of the outreach process. The results of this survey can be found on our website at <http://www.wraphome.org/work/civil-rights-campaign>



Phase two of our outreach began August 2011 to the present day as part of our Housekeys Not Handcuffs campaign. We have been successful in documenting **1527** additional outreaches to homeless folks who have experienced very similar civil rights violations as those in the first phase of outreach.

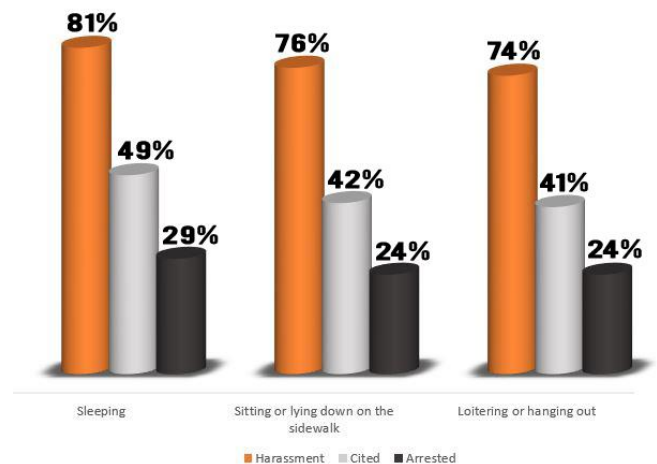
All of the folks we've surveyed answered a consistent set of questions and all did so only for the opportunity to speak "unfiltered" to the broader community

about what is really happening on our nation's streets to poor, disabled, and homeless community members. This is an important opportunity to lay the foundations for a national organizing campaign.

There can be no more denying that "Broken Windows," "Quality of Life," "Civil Sidewalks," "Public Commons for Everyone," 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 laws and campaigns.

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

- **81%** for sleeping, with **49%** of these people cited and **29%** arrested
- **76%** for sitting or lying down, with **42%** of these people cited and **24%** arrested
- **74%** for loitering or hanging out, with **41%** of these people cited and **24%** arrested



Other findings include:

- **70%** reported being harassed by Police without them using ANY law.
- **75%** reported being harassed by private security.
- **58%** reported that their harassment, citation or arrest was because they “appeared homeless.”
- 26% reported having bench warrants issued for their arrest.
- 7% felt that police always respect their rights

We then asked:

Do you know of places where it is safe and legal for you to sleep outside?

- **73%** No
- **27%** Yes

We also spoke to people about what the harassment and profiling looked like:

Do you think that you have been ticketed because of your...

- **76%** economic status
- **37%** race
- **25%** gender
- **25%** disability

Do police sometimes harass you without using the law?

- **70%** Yes
- **24%** No
- **6%** Don't Know

Have you ever seen or encountered private security guards hassling people, ordering people away, or otherwise policing public sidewalks or parks?

- **75%** Yes
- **20%** No
- **5%** Don't Know



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