Street Outreach Training

Understanding street outreach;
Building a campaign to grow people power!



WWW.WRAPHOME.ORG

Agenda

- Facilitator introductions
- Webinar Housekeeping
- Who are the WRAP members & what is WRAP
- Political situation
- Orientation of outreach
- Step by Step of conducting outreach

- Synthesis of outreach
- Building and launching a campaign
- WRAP member presentations
- WRAP initiatives
- Next steps
- Q+A

Webinar Housekeeping

- People will remain muted throughout the webinar.
- People are encouraged to send in any questions throughout the webinar by using the Q&A function!
- Webinar is being recorded and will be available on WRAP's website for future viewing!



WRAP Members



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

Housekeys Action Network Denver
Denver, CO
https://housekeysactionnetwork.com

Love and Justice in the Streets
Oakland, CA
www.loveandjusticeinthestreets.com

Judi's Midnight Diner
Medford, OR
www.judismidnightdiner.org

Unhoused Neighbors Union Missoula
Missoula, MT
https://linktr.ee/unhousedneighborsunion

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

Street Spirit
Berkley, CA
www.thestreetspirit.org

Where do we go Berkeley
Berkley, CA
https://www.wdwg.org

Human Right to Housing Collective
Seattle, WA
https://www.hrhcwa.org

Stop the Sweeps Seattle
Seattle, WA
https://linktr.ee/stopthesweeps

HOUSE KEYS NOT HANDCUFFS
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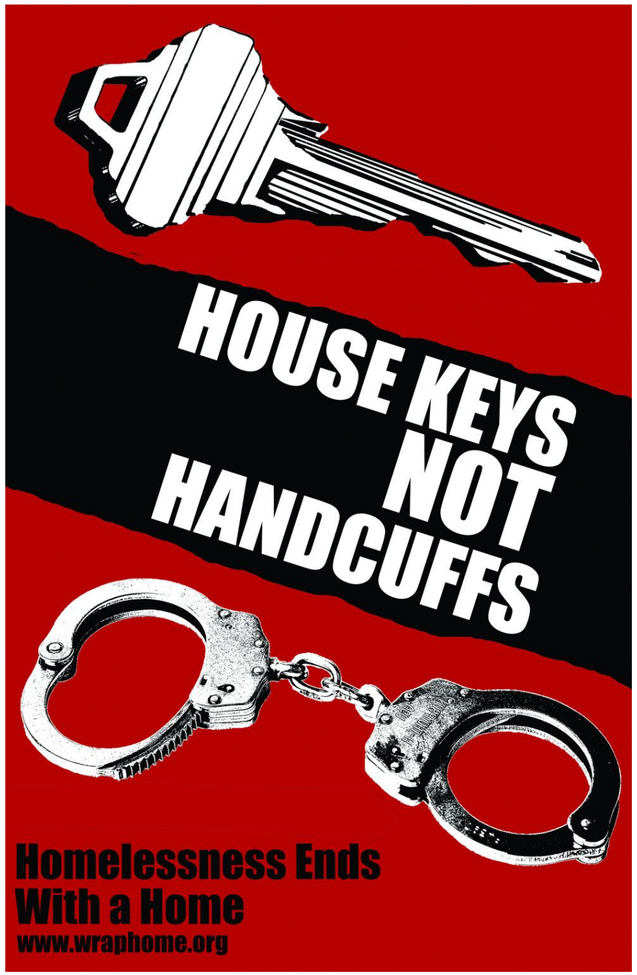
What is WRAP

WRAP was created to expose and eliminate the root causes of civil and human rights abuses of people experiencing poverty and homelessness in our communities.

- **Community Organizing through street outreach**
- **Advocacy**
- **Research**
- **Public Education**
- **Direct Action**
- **Artwork**



Political Situation



Historical background

- Banishment policies are not new in this country!
  - Okie Laws
  - Jim Crow
  - Operation Wetback
  - Ugly Laws

- Policies against different communities are implemented to protect people's wealth and property.



Criminalization of poverty

- The increase of militarization in our communities and the criminalization of our people continues today!
  - Occupation of LA via the national guard & the marines
  - Felony to sleep on state property at night in Tennessee
  - HUD policy directive: Homeless programs are being told they can't serve undocumented communities or provide gender affirming care
- No matter who you are; the struggle for a just and dignified livelihood are intertwined with one another!
- Johnson vs Grants Pass
  - Supreme court ruled in favor of Grants Pass June 28. 2024
    - The ruling determined it is NOT cruel and unusual to punishment to criminalize people for being homeless even if they have no place to go
- Impact of the ruling
  - 220 crime laws across the US have been passed since the ruling



Connecting the dots

- Outreach is a methodology to understand people's conditions and to identify trends amongst people's input.
- The political situation is ever evolving and it is important to understand the impact of the different developments.
- Documenting and compiling the results ensures that your priorities, messaging, research, artwork and organizing are directly accountable and reflective of the community.



Orientation of Outreach



Remember: Outreach is a fluid process! Today's webinar is a guide but is not a cut and paste answer!

- WRAP members approach to outreach is community based! People tell us their experiences, solutions, and priorities so we can compile the information to make our plans.
- Outreach is a methodology to identify the common threads of people in the community. These common threads are captured through the compilation of the documented outreach which help identify our messaging, priorities and organizing.
- The application of this outreach may look differently based on a community's local context.

Step by Step of Conducting Outreach



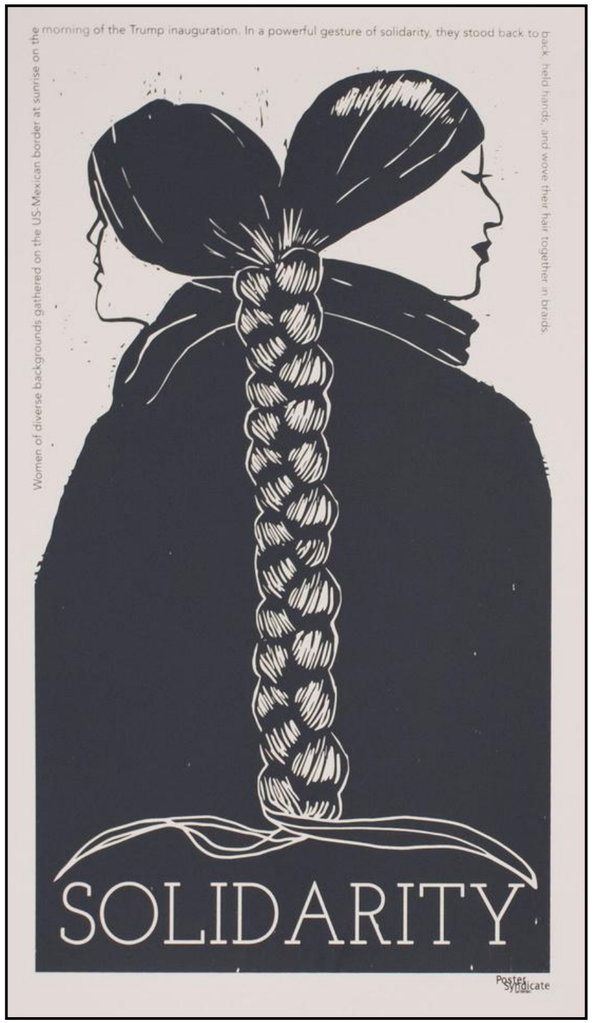
Getting your crew together

- Identify & build in an organizing structure that works for your community! Basically, how is your group going to work together:
  - Different options work for different people
  - Expectations for meetings
  - Decision making structure

- Understand what work is already being done in the community by other groups!

<u>If you don't have a crew!</u>

- You can build one with the people you're doing outreach with!
- Outreach will help in identifying reliable people who want to do the work.



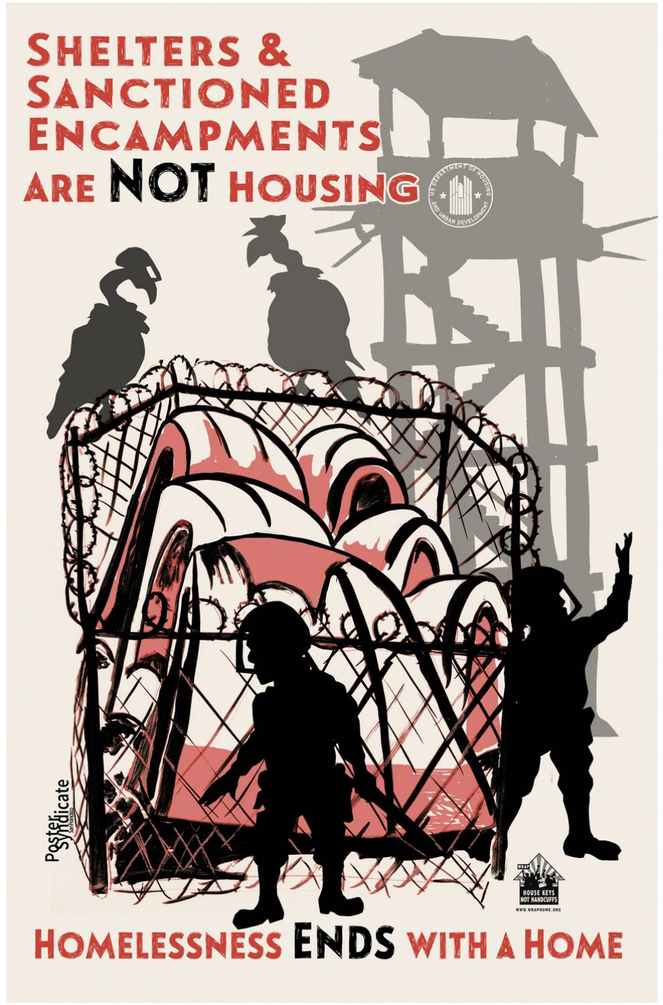
Go out into your community

- Differentiate your outreach from others
- Social/Power mapping
  - Develop a system to track oppressors, agents, & actors (important to track b/c of how it may inform your organization)
  - Identify who are the ones holding power and impacting unhoused individuals
- Develop a system to identify the common threads!
- Doing outreach is where you will get the best information coupled with research!



Outreach Guiding Principles

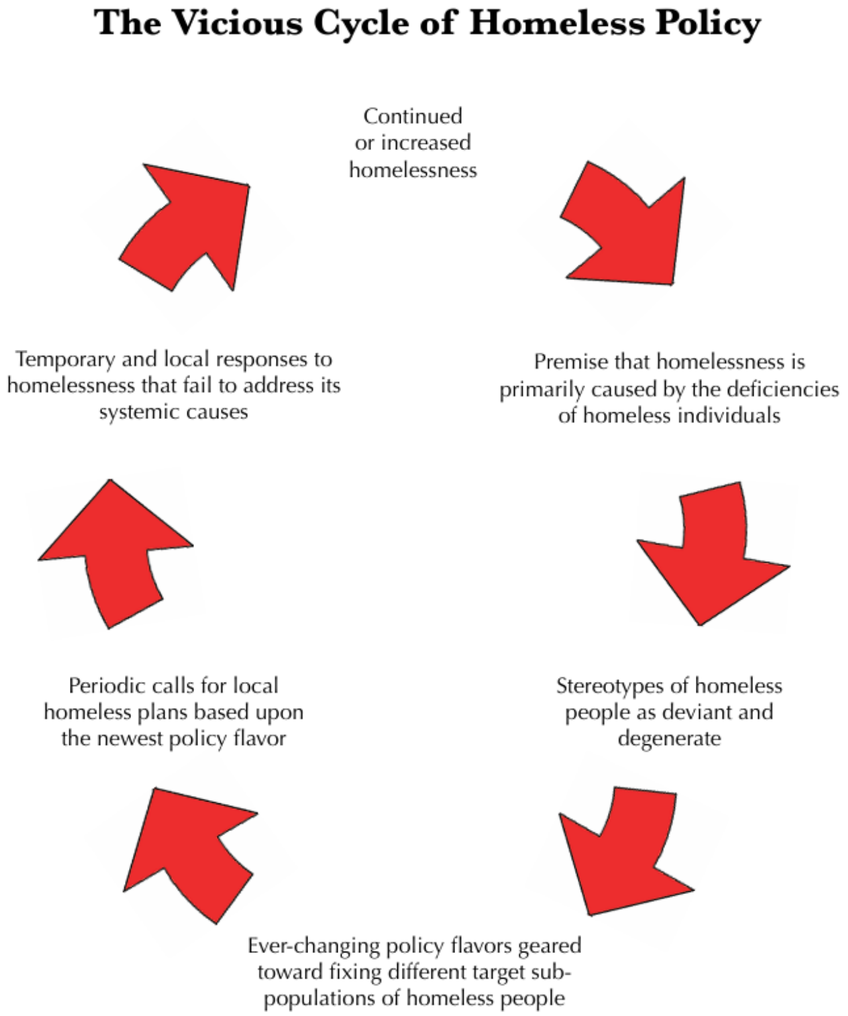
- Introduce yourself and ask if they'd like to talk to you
- Unhoused people have a right to privacy and may not be interested in talking to you
- Do not wake anyone up or bother anyone while they're doing something
- Pay attention to your body language
- Don't judge people and don't let personal beliefs get in the way
- Set clear boundaries: communicate if something does make you uncomfortable



Understand your Community & Local Policies

- When you talk to people about their experiences, you need to be able to bring it back to what's going on in their community.

- Do your homework on what is going on in your community
  - Read up on and review local ordinances
  - Know who your allies are
  - Understand what is the sentiment from officials and other agencies



Helpful Reminders!

- Outreach is an opportunity to listen and learn from people's experiences.
- Connect people's experiences with the research you've been able to conduct regarding local/state policies, police + private security, status of housing, etc.
- Know your enemy & help your neighbors know their enemy!
- No one's experience is the same and outreach is how we identify the commonalities!
- Outreach is how we bring the individual to the collective!



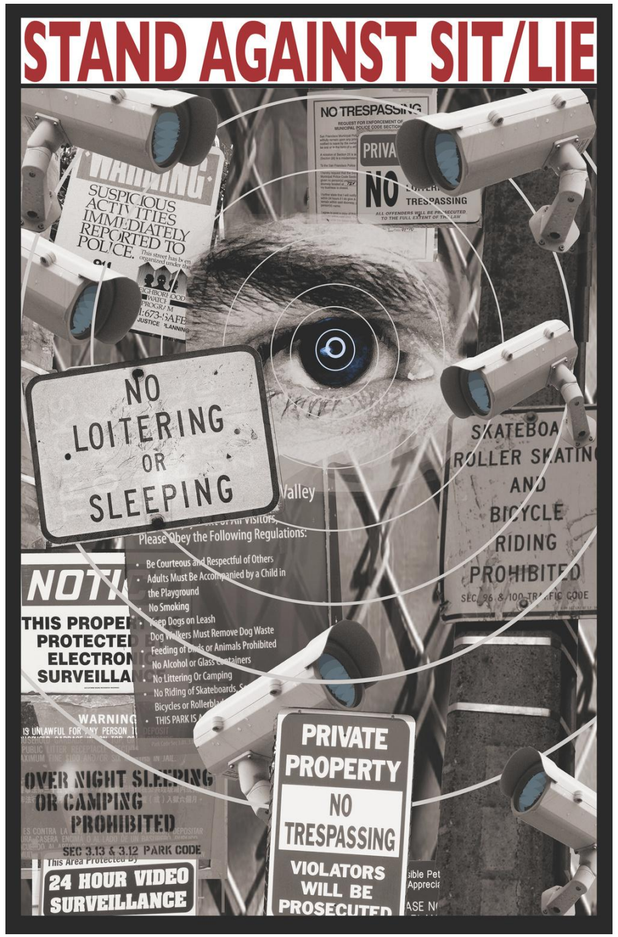
Synthesis of Outreach



Synthesizing your outreach

- Synthesis = put together information to make a conclusion
- Find the common threads by documenting the responses from each question
- The “common identified trends” get integrated into an output
- Utilize different ways to highlight what those trends are
  - Fact sheet, infographic, report, etc.
- Prioritize your campaigns and organizing work based on what you’ve gathered from outreach

Ensure community members have an opportunity to review and understand your synthesis!



Building a Campaign



Building a Campaign

- An analysis of the trends identified from the outreach is what helps build a campaign!
- Outreach helps us understand divisions, opinions, and groupings within a community. This information can be used to address internal opposition, build unity, and to implement effective strategy and tactics.
- What is a campaign?
- A program, plan and series of activities to achieve a specific goal
  - Make sure to consistently assess the campaign!



Examples



WRAP Member Examples (UnU)

What did we do to help establish our organization: Unhoused Neighbor Union Missoula?

- Development of materials + resources → Create a Know Your Rights flyer to take with you on outreach
  - This differentiates your outreach immediately from City-affiliated groups, service providers and cops
  - Provide helpful citations from civil code, including ordinances on camping areas, park and public space use, and penalties for violations; also what to do during an encounter with the police
  - Take water or some useful item to start a conversation
- Principles of our conduct
  - Use the 80/20 rule for listening and agitating (channeling energy towards change)
  - 80% of the time : Listen to what people are going through and who's perpetrating the violence
  - 20% of the time - Agitate!
- Redirect lateral anger with people they might express to their neighbors and advocate for basic needs being met
  - "You wouldn't be getting targeted for trash if garbage bins were in this park, right?"
  - "Sounds like we need more sharps containers if they don't want to see needles on the ground"
  - "There's supposed to be a bathroom for every 20 people according to the U.N., where are those?"
- Make sure you're not duplicating work
  - Check with local groups like tenants union and civil rights advocacy groups
    - Are they already organizing around poverty and homelessness?
    - Are they allies and want to join you on outreach?

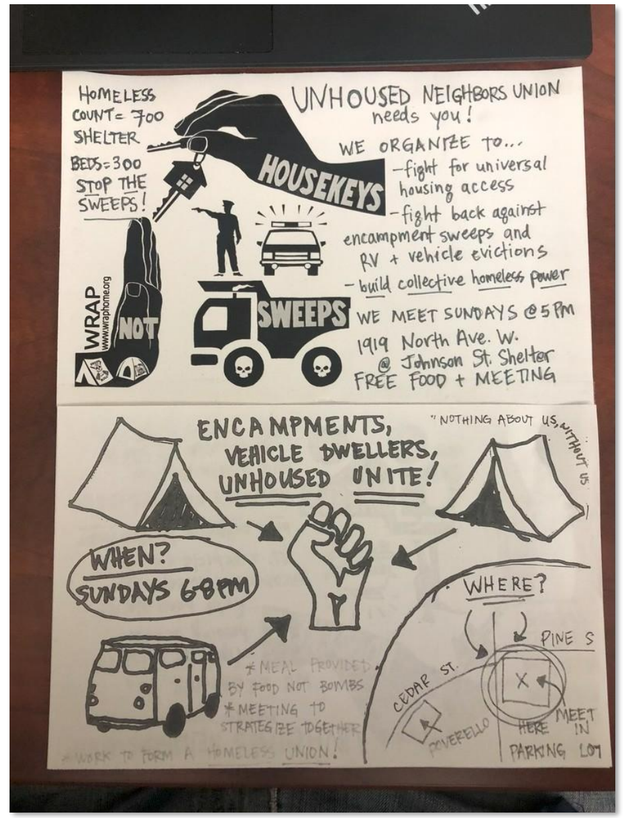
WRAP Member Examples (UnU)

- Learn your local policy & power-map your town
  - Ordinances
  - How aligned or hostile are you mayor and council members?
    - Are they aligned with developers? Real estate lobby?
    - Be able to tell people on outreach where the oppression is coming from
- Missoula City ordinance 12.60 research led us to power/influence (Business interests, NIMBY groups and the council members who exploit them to get what they want, Developers)
- Held meetings in encampments and the shelters to create a core team of unhoused organizers to work alongside and learn from
  - Bring whatever supplies you need to run a meeting
    - Some water/food
    - An easel and some butcher paper
    - Flyers for next meeting



WRAP Member Examples (UnU)

- Strategic partnerships
  - Establish relationships with ACLU and NLG
  - Food Not Bombs: Using mutual aid as a strategy rather than an end unto itself
  - Missoula Tenants Union: unite the tenant struggle “from the tenant to the apartment”
    - Either you have a landlord who can evict you of the box you’re renting or a landlord ready to evict you off the slab of sidewalk you’re surviving on
  - Advocacy groups who share our sense of social justice/understand mental health and substance use
    - Forward MT, Catalyst MT, Open Aid Alliance
- Organizing
  - Meeting
    - Reliable and accessible
  - Decision-making
    - Avoid free-for-all vent sessions (ensure the meeting is action oriented)
    - Redirect anger to action
- Center action and plans based on what we learn on the ground/develop leadership with unhoused organizers so we avoid saviorism in the space



WRAP Member Examples (LACAN)

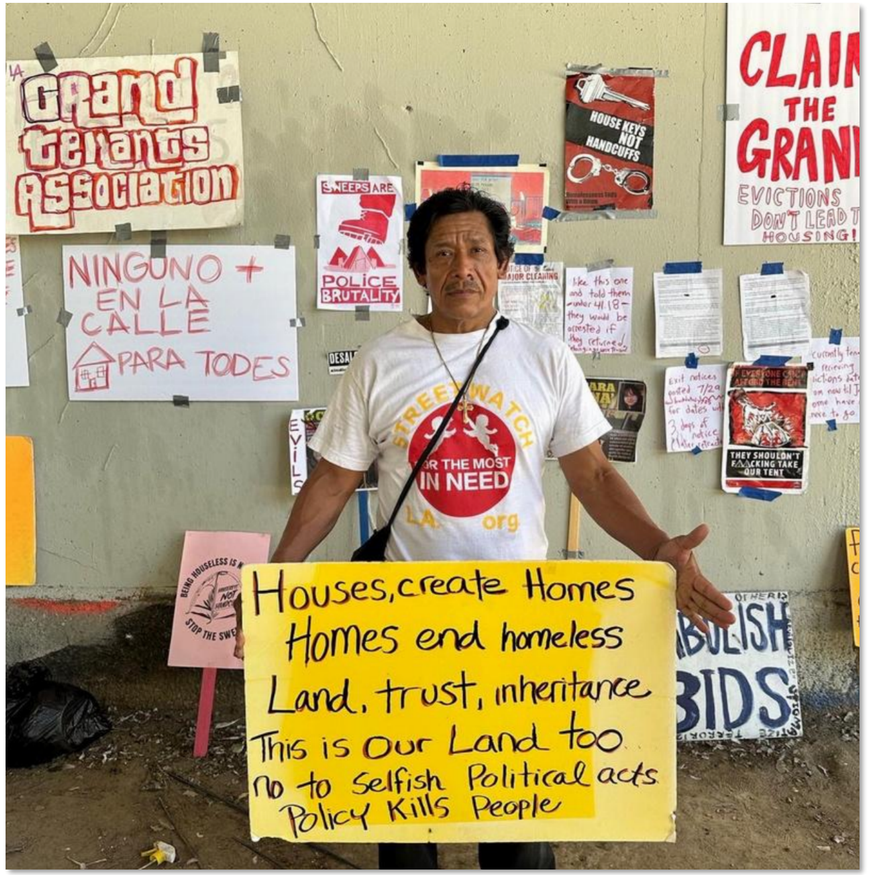
Understanding the conduct of outreach through Los Angeles Community Action Network

- Whether a camp or a shelter, we take time to canvass and get to know people, identify potential leaders and interested folks. Established relationships help build mutual aid and fightback networks.
- Being transparent with our folks about what we're doing and what we're not
- Being rooted in *building power*, our conduct must help build a culture of resistance within our memberships whether that's protests, turnup at City Hall, pushing back on policing and Sanitation etc
- Holding culturally relevant events that are outreach opportunities and moments to build with our folks
- HOLD MEETINGS ON THE BLOCK/where the people are: encampment, SRO hotel etc!
    - "Everyone does outreach – the churches, the pigs, the government" – General Dogon
    - We fight with you, not for you: sit down and join us!
- Site-specificity: what is security like?
    - We've been kicked off for tabling legally on a sidewalk, understanding right to public space is important.
        - Metro property vs public sidewalk, park, Federal vs State vs City or County property.
        - What are residents' relationships with security and do we need to take this into account to protect tenants against retaliation
        - Avoid unnecessary/non-strategic escalation.

WRAP Member Examples (LACAN)

We know there's a method to their madness: Sweeps and camp evictions scatter organized community or push them into places that make them more vulnerable to sweeps and police enforcement – maintaining contact as folks are swept into shelters or dark places is a crucial tactic. In LA, "41.18 zones" are created to give police and other City workers power to banish people from one area with nowhere to go. Facilitating housed/unhoused spaces where tenants organize for better conditions and systemic change on the long term.

Combat anti-houseless tendencies by housed people by building power across housed/unhoused lines, creating mutual aid projects and political education that build stronger community/ resistance rather than charity dynamics or saviorism.



WRAP Member Examples (LACAN)

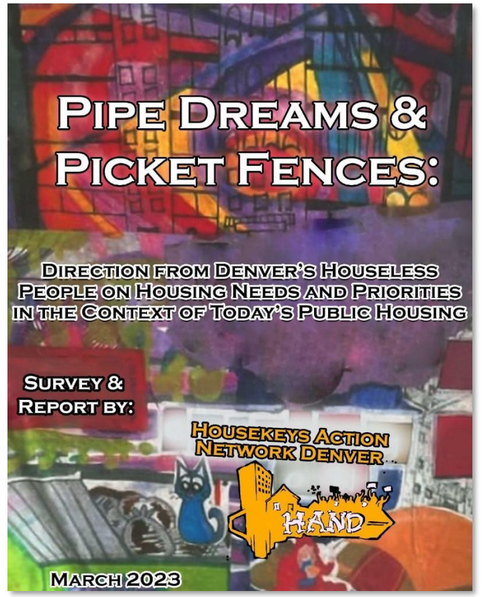
- Recipe for a Teach-In
  - Provide zoom zooms and wham whams i.e snacks 🍿
  - Building on existing relationships and activating newer folks

- Strategize:
  - who we want to reach, where is a good spot to gather – Where is the fight happening and does the community want us there?
  - Cross-collaborations and local groups to invite: where are the intersections?
  - What physical spaces can be activated, subversive, resource-full for the moment? What don't we know already and what are our shared needs?
  - Print materials, eye-catching art, and accessible seating
  - Deep canvassing: expect and embrace difficult questions
  - Find ways for people to participate/contribute!
  - Set up a next steps!



WRAP Member Examples (HAND)

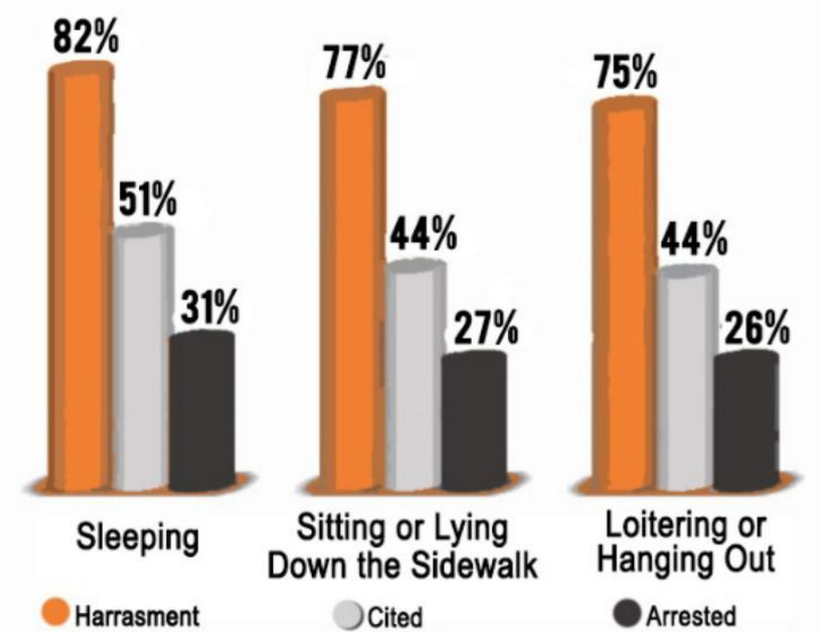
- How did we develop outreach into a campaign?
- HAND examples
  - Disability lawsuit : surveys → demand letter based on surveys → ongoing meetings/check ins
  - Migrant camp : relationship building → wrote notes on desires and demands → demand letter on shelter that must be met to leave camps → continued assistance & communication w/ camp residents
- Outreach
  - document direction from affected people (surveys, notes, etc.)



- Campaign demand : turn the direction gathered from outreach into the content of what you're fighting for
  - Continual checking in
    - Continually check in with affected people about developments in the campaign. Make changes, except or deny offers, based on continued communications with affected people.
- Collective fight!
  - Include affected people in the Campaign fight as much as possible. Speaking at rallies, attending meetings, speaking to the media, etc.

WRAP Criminalization Outreach

- Criminalization Outreach → Right 2 Rest Act → Sweeps Campaign
- WRAP members and allies conducted almost 1,900 outreaches in 12 cities across 5 states with questions regarding criminalization experiences
- From the responses we created a Fact Sheet of the most common experiences
- We created artwork, organizing priorities, research efforts with law schools and a template piece of State legislation that was introduced 9 times over 11 years in Oregon, Colorado and California and also put on the ballot in Denver Colorado
- While the Right To Rest Act has never successfully passed with these efforts – the community wide organizing behind its intent and message has been incredibly effective as an organizing tool since homeless people weren't the first impacted and unfortunately won't be the last



WRAP Sweeps Outreach

- Since the act did not pass, WRAP pivoted to launch an outreach initiative to continue our efforts to decriminalize homelessness and stop sweeps.
- The goal of our outreach is to highlight the priorities and experiences of people being swept and for organizations to identify campaigns + initiatives based off of these common threads.
- Join us so we can uplift the voices of our communities and have them heard nationwide!

We've conducted 270 outreaches so far:

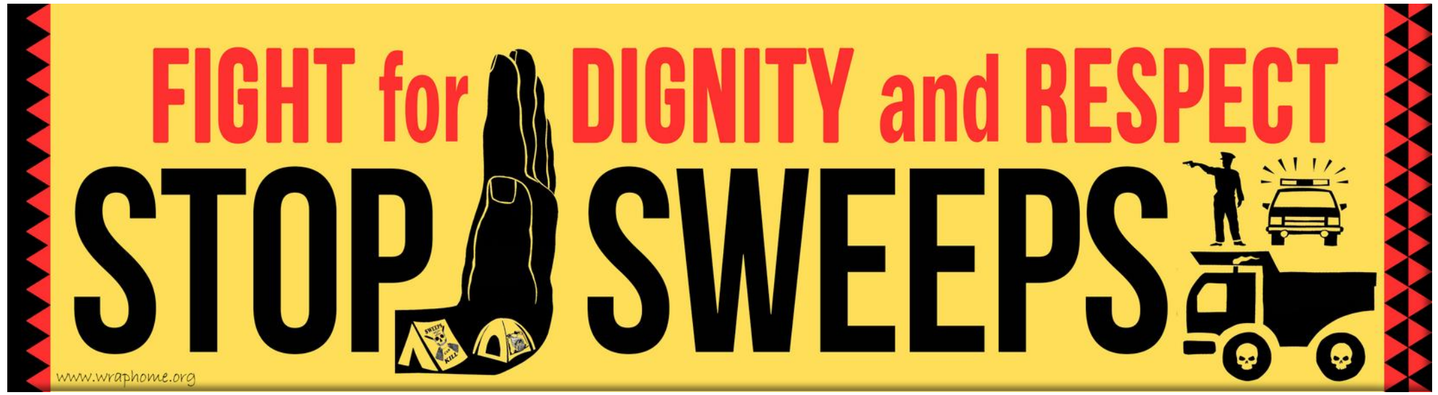
- 77% of sweeps conducted by police
- 62% threatened with arrest or citation
- 88% of people swept were NOT offered any service
- 85% were not offered any storage
- 76% ended up back on the street



FIGHT BACK! ORGANIZE AGAINST SWEEPS!

Nothing To Lose But Our Chains!

- Conducting outreach is a powerful tool for anyone to take up to build up their organizing!
- Take up the WRAP outreach!
  - Information, fact sheets, handouts, artwork, etc., are all available at **www.wraphome.org**
- Donate to the sweeps campaign!
  - All funds will go towards conducting the sweeps outreach
- Contact WRAP for trainings, organizing, further resources, etc
  - General inquiries- wrap@wraphome.org ; Organizing- joemae@wraphome.org



Q&A


MUST WE ALWAYS HAVE THIS?
WHY NOT HOUSING?
CONTRACT WITH AMERICA 1994
FIVE YEAR PLAN
HMIS
HUD VASH
TEN YEAR PLAN
HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHERS
HOPE VI
TANF
SHELTER
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