

ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS—A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

“Homelessness is destroying our once beautiful cities and economically distressing businesses. Allowing people to live in squalor and danger is not compassionate. We’ve got to have zero tolerance for unsheltered homelessness and implement a comprehensive plan for getting the unsheltered off the streets and into rehabilitation programs.” — Jessica Gomez

1

Addressing systemic homelessness:

The assisted living model for care of the elderly could be adapted to address systemic homelessness. This work will take place in community living complexes divided by level of care. Not all people struggling with chronic homelessness have the same challenges. Some suffer from co-occurring disorders, where substance abuse combined with mental health conditions drive them to carry out property crimes or exhibit unpredictable behavior. Others may be stable enough to hold a job but need support to rebuild family relationships before they are ready for skill building and self-sufficiency. Then there are those who just need a stable place to live, while they get their driver’s license, social security card, and put together a resume.

2

Levels of Care: The unsheltered who need treatment will be placed in long-term rehabilitation programs.

- Those in the criminal justice system due to mental health or addiction issues will receive medical treatment until they have been stabilized and begin responding positively to rehabilitation.
- Residents who are stable but require ongoing assistance from behavioral health and medical professionals will be housed and treated in a community-like setting.
- Residents who still need occasional support but can hold a job will work toward becoming self-sufficient. Ultimately, they will transition to an independent living model. Residents of these facilities will be allowed to remain there indefinitely if that is what they choose.

“We can do something about homelessness. Despite New York having a higher rate of homelessness than Oregon, only 5% or less of their homeless population is unsheltered, whereas it is 61% in Oregon.”¹

— Jessica Gomez

3

Reallocating monies, coordinating efforts:

A governor must work with all city mayors, city councils, county commissioners, nonprofits, insurers and others to come up with practical approaches and sensible reallocation of dollars. Merely throwing money at a problem without objectives, accountability and deliverables will not be tolerated.

“Based partially on my own experience as a homeless teen in the early 1990’s, I see a homeless encampment as a community of people. In many cases, they are all working together toward a singular goal—to survive. However, merely surviving should not be the Oregon way. Leadership and pragmatic solutions are way overdue.” — Jessica Gomez

4

Changing regulations:

There must be sufficient affordable housing to support our efforts to end homelessness. Oregon has the largest shortage of housing of any state in the nation.² Onerous regulations, high cost of permits and unnecessary bureaucracy are responsible for rising cost and dismal outcomes. This must be addressed so that all Oregonians can live in safe and affordable communities.

“We must get the unsheltered homeless off our streets. Once the multi-tiered support system is in place, we will no longer permit people to live unsheltered in our communities.” — Jessica Gomez



Strength in Differences. Together for Solutions.
JessicaGomezForGovernor.com

¹ HUD Annual Homelessness Assessment Report—2020

² Oregonian/Oregon Live, Sept 3, 2021