Homelessness in the West

Western Places/Western Spaces Conference 2020

Friday, March 6, 2020

Daniel Brisson
The Housing Affordability Crisis

• A Household in CO needs to earn $25/hr to afford an average 2-bedroom

• In CO there are 43 affordable units for every 100 low-income renters

• In Denver there are at least 5,800 people experiencing homelessness on a given night
  • There are at least 10,000 in CO
RENTAL HOMES AFFORDABLE AND AVAILABLE PER 100 EXTREMELY LOW INCOME RENTER HOUSEHOLDS BY STATE

Note: Extremely low income (ELI) renter households have incomes at or below the poverty level or 30% of the area median income. Source: NHHC tabulations of 2017 ACS PUMS Data.

©2019 National Low Income Housing Coalition
https://nlihc.org/gap
Housing Affordability Crisis Leads to Increases in Homelessness
Current Systems

- Meeting about 25% of the need

- Shelters
  - For whom?

- Concentrating poverty

- Innovations?
New and Hopeful Approaches

• Individuals and families are finding their own solutions
  • Doubling up
  • Tent cities

• Build out of the crisis?
  • ADUs
  • Tiny Homes
  • Vacancy Tax

• New partners in the issue of homelessness
  • Police
  • libraries
Homelessness in Trinidad, Colorado

Sixty-three individuals experiencing homelessness in Trinidad, Colorado, were interviewed during June 13–14, 2018. The interviews were conducted by staff with the Burns Center on Poverty and Homelessness from the University of Denver, in partnership with local volunteers. Interviews were conducted at the Trinidad Library, Fisher Soup Kitchen, Trinidad Community Center, a local laundromat, as well as in public spaces. Not everyone encountered during these two days agreed to be interviewed. Data reflected below is self-reported by the interviewees.

History of Housing and Homelessness

Where Slept Most Frequently v. Last Night

- ACOA Shelter
- Outside
- Car/Tent
- Homeless
- Housing
- Friends/Family
- Other
- Hospital

Method of Income

- Work
- Government
- Temporary Assistance
- Savings
- Rent

How Long in Las Animas County

- More than 5 years: 31%
- 6 to 10 years: 9.6%
- 1 to 5 years: 25.9%
- Less than 1 year: 34.5%

Total Time Spent in Homelessness

- Less than 1 year: 29%
- 1 to 5 years: 56.6%
- 6 to 10 years: 9.1%
- More than 10 years: 11.3%

Reasons for Homelessness

- Unable to Pay Rent: 51.6%
- Loss of Job: 42.1%
- Relationship Problems: 30.7%
- Bar/Credit: 32.3%
- Domestic Violence: 29.9%

Moved to Find Work: 25.8%

- Rent to Lease: 22.6%
- Problems with Benefits: 21%
- Drug Usage: 21%
- Eviction History: 19%
Daniel Brisson, MSW, Ph.D.
Professor
Executive Director, Center for Housing and Homelessness Research
University of Denver, Graduate School of Social Work

email: daniel.brisson@du.edu
Bio: https://portfolio.du.edu/dbrisso2
Center for Housing and Homelessness Research Web Page: http://www.du.edu/burnescenter/