

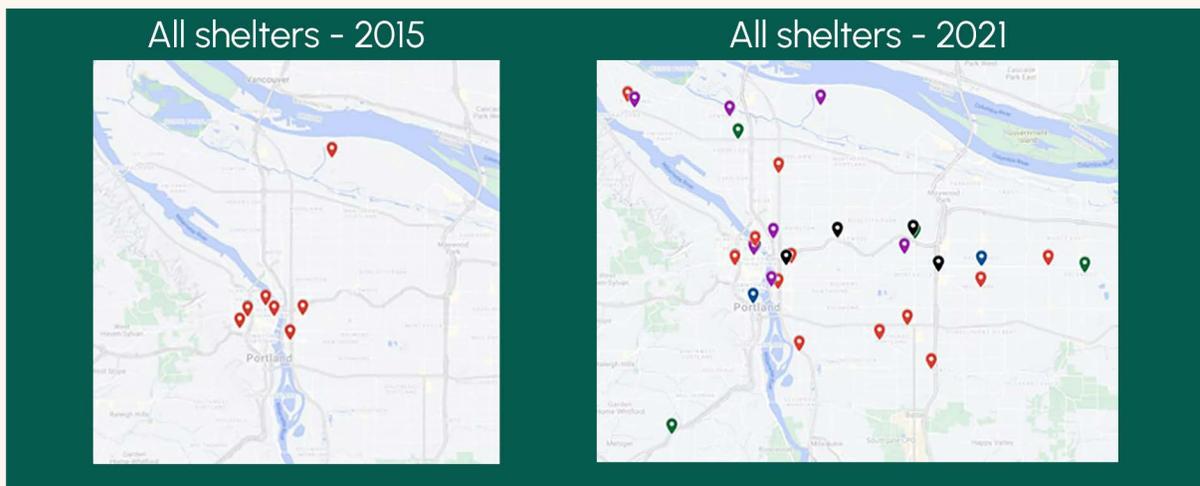
# 5 Myths About Homelessness in the Portland Area

## 1. Local government is doing nothing to address this crisis

Since the City and County created the Joint Office of Homeless Services in 2016, thousands of people each year have moved into housing, including people who've moved to housing directly from the street.

Available shelter beds have increased from 650 beds in 2015 to 1600 in 2022 -and the quality of shelter has improved significantly.

Outreach capacity has doubled since 2019, and the outreach supply center provides gear through outreach workers, community mutual aid and volunteer groups.



Thanks to the 2020 Supportive Housing Services Metro Regional Measure, permanent supportive housing, rent assistance, shelter capacity, outreach efforts, hygiene services and trash pickup are all increasing rapidly since funds first started being issued in July 2021.

## 2. Portland's homeless crisis is more severe than anywhere else

This is a national crisis - Los Angeles County alone has nearly 20% of the total unsheltered population in the U.S.

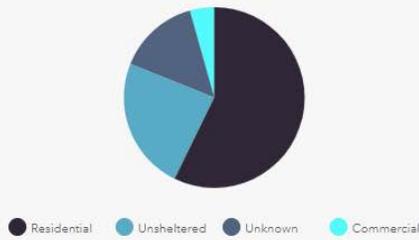
Portland is 24th in the country for rate of houselessness among cities with over 100k people, according to HUD statistics,

The idea that people come to Portland to be houseless here is patently false -the data shows that the percentage of people experiencing houselessness who moved to Portland from another location is about the same as the percentage of housed people who moved to Portland from another location.

### 3. Houseless camps are the source of all trash in the community

People who are living in camps do have trash, like everyone else, but counter to stereotypes about them, the amount of trash they produce is not more than housed neighbors - it's just more visible, and doesn't get picked up every week!

Source of Waste at Sites Cleaned



Dumping trash near or on houseless camps is very common - housed people often drive up, dump an old couch or refrigerator, and drive away, and the houseless residents of the camp don't have the means to remove these items from their camps. The Metro RID patrol, which clears an average of 70 tons of waste a month from public property in the Portland metro area, found that around 60% of the waste is from residential sources. Less than one-quarter of the waste comes from camps.

### 4. People living on the streets choose to be there

In every survey of houseless people in the Portland area, the vast majority say they do not want to be living on the streets.

The reality is that affordable housing is harder to find - rents have increased significantly over the last several years. According to Portland State University, 38,000 people — across all three Metro counties — experienced homelessness at some point in 2017, and the market has only grown more harsh since then.

Despite rhetoric to the contrary, racism is indeed a major driving factor of homelessness. People of color are more likely to be pushed into homelessness, and face greater barriers to exiting homelessness. We see this overrepresentation in communities across the country.

### 5. Homeless people drive up the crime rate

Homeless people are overwhelmingly the victims of crimes, not perpetrators.

In one recent example, an 80-year old woman sleeping on the street was kicked in the head in her sleeping bag by perpetrators who drove up in a truck, committed the crime and drove away. There is little recourse for this woman and the many others that have been attacked in this way.

Housed Portlanders frequently call 911 on unhoused neighbors to report "unwanted persons". Try 211 for help with resources, or ask for 'Portland Street Response Team' when calling 911 to have a mental health professional respond.

For more information on the work and investments made by the Joint Office of Homeless Services, check the website [multco.us/johs](http://multco.us/johs)