

Proposal

For our proposal question we first decided to narrow down our problem so that we could have a better time grounding our ideas. We took the problem of homelessness and broke it down into different categories of crime, background, mental health, and what was currently being done. After doing research on these categories we finally decided to focus on and narrow down the question to “How do we help homeless people find short term housing and short term rehabilitation for the overall betterment of character and a higher likelihood of successful societal integration”? As we dove deeper into the research on homelessness we found that many of the people on the street are put into situations that make it almost impossible to come out of, for instance if you are on the street and you don't have a place to sleep you may end up sleeping in a private area. Sleeping on private property is against the law and if you get charged, it goes on your criminal record affecting your ability to get a job. In fact most homeless people get arrested for petty low level crimes, this fuels a never ending cycle of getting arrested, not finding work and being unable to help the situation, to doing something even riskier to survive until you get arrested again. These statistics and claims are sourced from www.jstor.org in an article written by Snow, David A titled “Criminality and Homeless Men: An Empirical Assessment.”

When we collected data from our survey we found that 57.6 percent of people have had an encounter with a homeless person that left them feeling unsafe. This combined with the fact that on average 49.2% of people reported seeing on average 3-5 homeless people a day in tempe alone. Having over 50% of the city of tempe viewing these individuals as a threat can be damaging and have long term effects on rehabilitation overall. The mental health of the homeless is a massive issue and going in and out of the system can have some devastating effects. In fact most of the homeless on the street have some form of mental illness that limits their overall

ability to join and maintain a stable financial lifestyle. Many of the homeless need people to come in to help with their mental health issues because that can be the difference between them getting back off the streets and starting to return to a normal life. When we sent out our survey we asked a question regarding if people thought homeless shelters were effective. In our results 51.7% of people said they were not sure.

In the United States about 17 out of every 10,000 people are homeless and lacking the basic goods they need to survive and live a healthy life. “In 2018, 6.5 million Americans experienced severe housing cost burden, which means they spent more than 50 percent of their income on housing. This marked the fourth straight year of decreases in the size of this group. However, the number of severely cost burdened Americans is still 13 percent higher than it was in 2007, the year the nation began monitoring homelessness data.” With the increase in housing prices across the United States homeless percentages have skyrocketed leaving many Americans on the street. It was also found that “Over the last five years, the number of temporary housing beds (Emergency Shelter, Safe Haven, and Transitional Housing) has decreased by 9 percent.” This is a large portion of the housing that homeless people were able to take advantage of to help get them off of the streets but these shelters are becoming more and more limited. The COVID-19 pandemic has recently also contributed to the homeless population as individuals have lost their jobs, leading to them being evicted from their homes.

Currently in Tempe there are approximately 400 homeless people and counting, according to Tempe’s annual PIT(point in time) count from 2018 to 2019 the number of homeless people rose from 287 to 384. This number may not seem like a lot for an entire city but according to a survey we sent, out a majority of people see about 3-5 homeless people a day and 15% reported seeing 6 or more per day. Many of these people are a part of families who are all

on the street, some even sacrificing their normal lives to help family members navigate the streets. During the annual PIT Count volunteers met families and individuals who all had different stories for example, Doug,²⁴ said he quit his job because the hours and long bus rides each way mean time away from helping his parents maneuver the streets. There are hundreds of stories like this and we hope that Tempe can step up and help it's people in their time of need.

As of today, Tempe does have some housing options for the homeless but it is still not nearly enough. Many of these housing options fill up very fast so it is not guaranteed that you will always be able to stay there. Another shocking statistic we got from our survey is that only 5.6% of people think Tempe's shelters are effective at housing the homeless population. This should be a larger issue to the city and many people seem to be getting the idea that Tempe doesn't care. This issue can also cause fights and verbal arguments amongst the homeless as people can get aggressive if things don't go their way sometimes. For example, in New York homeless incidents are happening almost daily, "The episode was the second fatal stabbing in a week involving a homeless man in New York City: On Nov. 5, a 38-year-old was stabbed to death outside a shelter in East Elmhurst, Queens. Both attacks have spotlighted the violence endemic to the shelter system and the challenges the city has faced in trying to curb it across over 400 of its shelters, despite efforts to overhaul security at these facilities in recent years." Another common issue with Tempe's current public housing is that they are often not pet friendly discouraging many people from using them. According to Yelp reviews and the websites of the shelters only one shelter around Tempe allows pets and that is in Scottsdale which is quite a far walk. The city currently has some programs to help the homeless get jobs but without sustainable housing they often will lose these jobs quickly. Concerning the cost of housing and feeding the homeless in Tempe there are many things that go in to play, To go and feed hundreds of thousands of

homeless will cost millions of dollars and for that there are many charity organizations across Tempe. But for now homeless people are usually just eating less than nutritious foods that aren't good for their health and aren't receiving enough vitamins to stay healthy. Multiple food banks around the city contribute to feeding the homeless but again there still aren't enough because the homeless outnumber the communities that help out. With shelter there are many cities we can compare to and put in action where we can help homeless people with housing, taking in consideration the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles built hundreds of mini homes for the homeless in the center of the city with a population of homeless people has grown by 50% in the past five years. These mini homes include a shower, a bed, a bathroom, and a heater for the cold temperatures in the weather And from the same organization they offer food to the homeless.

Our solution for helping solve the homelessness problem in tempe is to focus on rewarding individuals that are working while simultaneously taking away the stress of affording housing and getting back on your feet. We propose that instead of opening up more shelters that have a set amount of time of occupancy, we decided to make housing that can act as a middle ground between a shelter and fully independent living. Our idea is to give homeless people a temporary free housing situation as long as they prove that they are trying to maintain a job and are overall improving their situation. If a homeless person can prove that they are improving they are allowed to stay in our facilities, however these housing facilities are temporary and aren't fully long-term. Residents are expected to stay no longer than 2-8 months. Their overall circumstances will determine how long they get to stay.

In order to open up a homeless shelter, we will need a variety of licenses and funding. On average it takes about 6 months to build the shelter itself and it would take another week or so to find employees for this building. Before we can build, however we will need to obtain a

Nonprofit corporation, EIN, and Nonprofit tax-exempt status from the Irs. This can take upwards of 2-12 months to get a response back and approval. This is after you allocate a space to build it and get all of the permits needed to build on a piece of land. We could save time by buying prebuilt properties and turning them into homeless facilities. This will save time, however may cost more money. Lastly we will need to acquire a federal grant that is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and urban development. These grants will take a couple of months to obtain however it is highly needed to maintain funding of the shelter.

As a stakeholder helping to combat homelessness will show your community and business affiliates that you have high morals and that you are dedicated to your community. Many people think that there are already options for homeless people to get shelter but in fact nearly half are still sleeping outside every night, according to The National Alliance to End Homelessness. “ Far too many people in America sleep outside and in other locations not meant for human habitation. This group includes more than 200,000 people (37 percent of the overall population)” By pushing this initiative for semi-permanent housing for homeless people who continuously attend work, you are making a positive change in our community and are giving these individuals hope.

There are many benefits to the community regarding feeding the homeless and giving them affordable housing, for starters there will be a massive decrease in crime, this is due to the fact that the people who commit crimes usually commit crimes for the money and that is just survival, they need this money to feed themselves or their families and usually to do other illegal activities. Considering that they will have a roof over their heads like I stated with the LA mini houses, there will also be a massive decrease in drug use and overdoses and this is a good thing because people don't have to keep dying due to drugs. Apart from the decrease in crime and

decrease in drug use the other benefits are with the families of the homeless, with the housing provided to them and then being able to have food this allows them to be with their families and stay together. Overall it's a great benefit to the community and adds many good things to come from it, homeless people don't have to keep trying to survive day to day. They can finally live in a drug-free environment with less crime rates and the community will be safer overall in Tempe.

If we are able to help get homeless people off of the streets and back onto their feet, the neighborhood will become safer which will have a huge impact on the community. Homeless people do not have the money for the amount of resources they need do tax dollars are used to help them, “In 2012, Shaun Donovan, the secretary of the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) stated that, ‘...between shelters and emergency rooms and jails, it costs about \$40,000 a year for a homeless person to be on the streets’” (CaringWorks). By helping the homeless get back on their feet the communities tax dollars could be used towards something more beneficial for the community as a whole.

Permanent housing has been done in a few ways in other places that have been very effective. It has been done with people that have chronic illnesses, disabilities, and mental health issues and have struggled with being homeless more than once. For finding other ideas similar that have worked I could not find as many. Rapid re-housing is another way that can have been able to stay in housing that has worked for short term rentals. This system has worked multiple places.

Our idea is the best option because the current problem with homelessness isn't finding a home for them but rehabilitating them. Opening up more homeless shelters will only get people temporary relief for a short period of time, and with the rate of homelessness rising in recent years this solution isn't sustainable. So instead we decided to try to reduce the rate of

homelessness by focusing on rehabilitation instead of short-term housing. Without having to worry about rent homeless people are able to keep a lot more of their money received, they don't have to worry about not getting fired for personal hygiene as they will have showers ready for them, and lastly we can have staff that monitors drug use and makes sure that they are getting the help they need. This solution is the best because we aren't putting a bandage on the problem but instead attacking it directly at the core. We will be giving people a safe place to sleep, eat, and relax all while teaching them how to reintegrate with society and giving them hope for a second chance. Overall most people have the same answer and opinion for homeless people, feeding and housing them. 80% of the people who answered our survey thought that it would be beneficial to extend the number of a lot of nights at homeless shelters. This might be because they would stay off the streets and the benefits would be greater than usual. And also another 80% of the people who answered our survey thought that homeless shelters should have more of a focus on rehabilitation mental and physically. We think it's great that people are having these opinions because this will definitely help the streets of Tempe and have a boost in the fall of crime rates.

Work cited:

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Working Link to the Source:

https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/homelessness_programs_resources/hrc-factsheet-current-statistics-prevalence-characteristics-homelessness.pdf

