



# Permanent Supportive Housing for Extremely Low-Income Older Adults Northwest Pilot Project

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# About Northwest Pilot Project

- 54 years of providing direct service
- Small, focused organization
- Very low-income seniors, age 55 +, Multnomah County
- 3,500 clients/year
- Housing navigation, placement and stability; case management; support services
- Policy and systems advocacy

***Mission:*** to offer opportunities for a life of dignity and hope to very low income seniors in Multnomah County by solving housing and transportation needs.

***Vision:*** All low-income seniors have the opportunity to live in safe and affordable long-term housing.

# Current Landscape

Increasing client acuity  
limiting client housing  
options and impacting  
staff

Limited client access to  
behavioral health,  
substance use disorder,  
primary care

Urgency to address  
visible homelessness in  
policy forums

Clients eligible for OR  
Health Plan but may not  
be enrolled or engaged  
with health care system

Social service providers  
use workarounds to  
coordinate health care  
outside of the Medicaid  
system

Social and human  
services wages and work-  
force capacity impacting  
service delivery

# Housing Challenges for Chronically Homeless Older Adults



- ❖ Older adults are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population
- ❖ Only 1 in 3 older adults who meet criteria for housing assistance receive it.
- ❖ Drastic shortage of deeply affordable, accessible units for older adults
- ❖ Age-related health issues exacerbated by homelessness = “50 is the new 70”
- ❖ Shortage of support service for those who do get placed in housing
- ❖ Benefits like Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) don’t meet housing costs.

# Similar.....but different

## Housing with Services (HWS)

- Provides care navigation in affordable housing properties that serve **older adults and younger people with disabilities**.
- A multidisciplinary care navigation team of physical health, mental health, and social work professionals collaborates with property-based resident service coordinators to provide onsite assistance to residents in affordable housing communities.
- Residents in affordable senior housing properties choose their own health care providers and insurers. no single health provider or insurer serves all of the residents in a property.

## Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

- PSH is a type of housing first model that prioritizes moving unhoused people with particularly high acuity - specifically **those who have been chronically homeless** - into permanent housing while also offering them a variety of services
- Ongoing rent assistance and case management are provided
- Services may include physical rehabilitation, mental health care, treatment for substance use disorders, and even home care.
- The specific treatment program is customized to meet the needs of the client, and is voluntary



# NWPP's Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Program

- Started in 2021
- Currently serving 117 older adults. 70% were chronically homeless at time of entry into our program.
- PSH clients get permanent rent assistance, ongoing case management, and a tailored service plan to support their housing stability.
  - NWPP provides some services directly, like transportation, and connects clients with specialized services
  - Specialized services include housekeeping, health care, treatment for substance abuse and mental health, legal services, etc.
- Clients live in “scattered site” housing, or in “project based” subsidized apartment buildings



# Dale's Homecoming

Dale lived for seven years on the streets of downtown Portland. During those years, Dale says, "I was on meth really bad. I was a hopeless to die alcoholic. I had just lost touch with reality. I was caught up in this world where I didn't think I'd ever make it out alive."

Dale was supported by Central City Concern's Recuperative Care Program then connected him to NWPP. NWPP secured an apartment, rent assistance, and benefits.

"Now," Dale adds, "I just try to take it one day at a time. And I'm so grateful. There's people out there that want help, that don't even know how to get help. Just don't give up hope."





# Policy Recommendations

- **Housing retention:** create statewide rent assistance program; streamline a process that allows OHP-eligible individuals and their case managers to access health care information and services.
- **Accessible identification of client OHP coverage:** Create a comprehensive strategy to ensure that housing service providers have an accessible route to identify both the CCO and the health plan that a client is assigned to. Do so in a way that does not place additional administrative burden on the provider.
- **“De-silo” health and housing systems via a bilateral, referral system.** Define clear access pathways for housing service providers to directly communicate with CCOs and health plans. This would ensure a client's acute or chronic needs are addressed before the point of destabilizing their housing.





# Further Reading

[Multnomah County Supportive Housing Services Program](#)

[Multnomah County Point-in-Time Count](#)

National Alliance to End Homelessness. *Data Visualization: The Evidence on Housing First*  
<https://endhomelessness.org/resource/data-visualization-the-evidence-on-housing-first/>

HOPE-HOME project: Study on older adults experiencing homelessness in the SF Bay area led by Dr. Margo Kushel

- UCSF, February 2016: ["Homeless people suffer geriatric conditions decades early"](#)
- SF Chronicle, March 2019: ["Aging onto the street"](#)

Harvard Joint Center on Housing Studies

- [Research page](#) on aging and affordable, accessible housing

Housing With Services Case Study: [https://leadingage.org/wp-content/uploads/drupal/Housing%20With%20Services\\_Portland%20OR\\_FINAL.PDF](https://leadingage.org/wp-content/uploads/drupal/Housing%20With%20Services_Portland%20OR_FINAL.PDF)

Racial Equity and Older Adults

- Journal of Housing for the Elderly, 2018: ["Vulnerable African American seniors: The challenges of aging in place"](#)
- American Society on Aging, 2021: ["What might it mean for the United States to achieve equity for older adults of color?"](#)
- Justice in Aging, 2021: [Issue brief on older adults and housing instability](#)

Dale's Homecoming: [https://www.nwpilotproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/NWPP\\_summer22\\_final.pdf](https://www.nwpilotproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/NWPP_summer22_final.pdf)

# Thank you!



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