

MYTHS OF HOMELESSNESS



**Portland
Rescue Mission**
Giving Hope. Restoring Life.®

Misconceptions about homelessness are common, and they can keep us from seeing the full picture. These myths oversimplify a complex reality and overlook the people behind it. At Portland Rescue Mission, we believe that when we better understand the realities of homelessness, we're better equipped to respond with compassion, purpose, and hope.

Here are some of the most common myths and the truth behind them. Together, we can be part of lasting transformation in our community. We hope you join us!

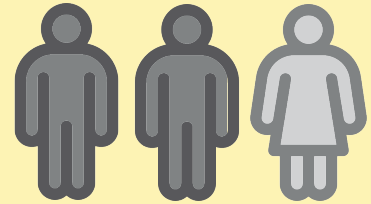
MYTH #1:
Sufficient,
affordable
housing will end
homelessness

FACT: Housing is essential, but it is not the whole answer. At PRM, we address the physical, emotional, and spiritual roots of homelessness to guide people in need from a life of crisis to lasting transformation.

MYTH #3:
Homelessness primarily
affects single adult men

FACT:

Oregon is #1 for homeless families, and one third of Portland's homeless population is female. Behind these numbers are men AND women who need healing. That's why we exist. To help restore lives.



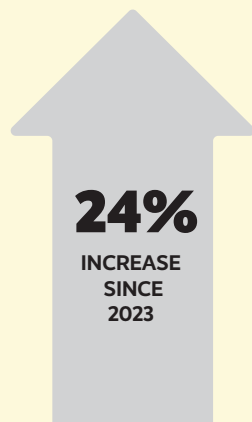
MYTH #2:
Homelessness is
caused by
personal choices

FACT: While personal choices have an impact in all our lives, homelessness is shaped by trauma, hardship, and instability – commonly rooted in broken relationships. At PRM, we provide faith-centered, trauma informed care to transform the lives of each individual.

MYTH #4:
Homelessness only happens in
downtown Portland

FACT:

Over the past two years, PRM has served 24% more people, including many in neighborhoods far beyond downtown Portland. To meet this growing need, we've expanded services into East Portland and the I-205 corridor to reach deeply impacted communities.



MYTH #5:
Homelessness will never
end in Portland

FACT:

We see lives change every day. Last year, 231 of PRM participants achieved stable outcomes away from street life. By focusing on one person at a time, we can create significant change across the whole community.



MYTH #6:

Homelessness could never happen to me or my family

FACT:

The truth is, many people experiencing homelessness once had stable lives. That's why PRM offers a range of services to meet diverse needs within a supportive community, helping individuals restore their lives.



MYTH #7:

Helping people keeps them homeless

FACT:

The right kind of help doesn't enable – it transforms. At PRM, **84% of the New Life Recovery Program graduates in the last five years have remained addiction-free and in stable housing.** This is a testament to the value of our holistic and individualized recovery program.



MYTH #8:

If someone wanted to stop being homeless tomorrow, they could

FACT:

Leaving homelessness is rarely immediate or simple. It takes time and a caring community. For example, finding a job often requires a supportive team to help meet basic needs like shelter, clothing, a shower, proper identification, and a resume. That's why PRM walks alongside each person to address their individual needs as they restore their lives.

MYTH #9:

All people experiencing homelessness are dangerous

FACT:

Unsheltered individuals face mortality rates 2 to 4 times higher than those in shelters, a reality highlighting the dangers people on the street face, not the danger they pose. That's why PRM provides immediate support, safe shelter, and a faith-centered community, so vulnerable people can stabilize and transition off the streets.

MYTH #10:

I'm just one person; my help won't matter

FACT:

At PRM, transformation happens one life at a time within a supportive community made possible by our 90+ dedicated staff and more than 1,600 caring volunteers. Your role matters because we can't do this alone. Whether you volunteer, give, or pray, together we bring hope and help transform lives.



Every person experiencing homelessness carries a unique story, and real change happens when communities respond together. At Portland Rescue Mission, we believe everyone can make a difference. Let's move beyond the myths and become part of the solution, one person at a time.

To get involved, email Dallas Lange (dallasl@pdxmission.org), or visit our website (www.PortlandRescueMission.org).

SOURCES:

<https://portlandrescuemission.org/>
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2024-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7376969/>



**Portland
Rescue Mission**
Giving Hope. Restoring Life.®