

LIVED EXPERIENCE AND EQUITY

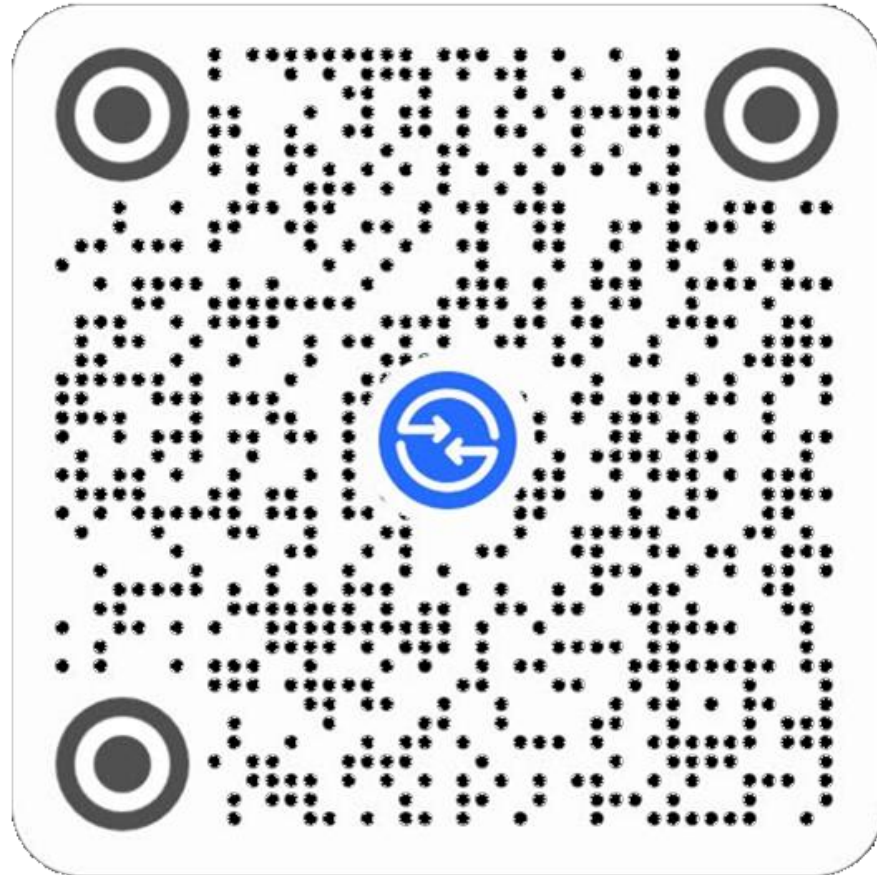
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND CAPACITY



POLICY, PRACTICE, AND RESEARCH

COMMUNITY AND MOVEMENT BUILDING

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2025 NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
ENDING HOMELESSNESS

June 30–July 2, 2025 — Washington, D.C. — #NAEH2025



# 2025 State of Vehicle Residency



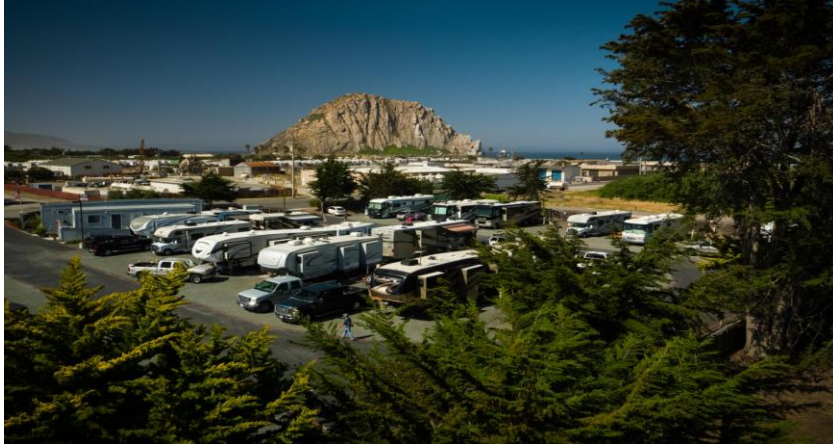
**Dr. Graham J. Pruss**  
Executive Director  
National Vehicle Residency Collective





# Settlement Bias

A tendency to see familiar forms of settlement as 'fit' or correct and unfamiliar forms of settlement as 'unfit' or incorrect.



# Overview



1. What is vehicle residency and vehicular homelessness?
2. Vehicle Residency Triage Model
3. Vehicular Homelessness in Western PiT Counts
4. Semi-tethered and untethered Vehicle Residents
5. RV residents in Los Angeles
6. Washington State Vehicle Resident Rights and Tow Protection (Northwest Justice Project)
7. May 2025 mass eviction of 100 to 200 vehicle residents from the Deschutes National Forest in Bend, Oregon
8. Municipal, State and Federal legal trends
9. Q & A

# What is *vehicle residency*?





## What is *vehicle residency*?

The habitation of a vehicle as a primary residence.

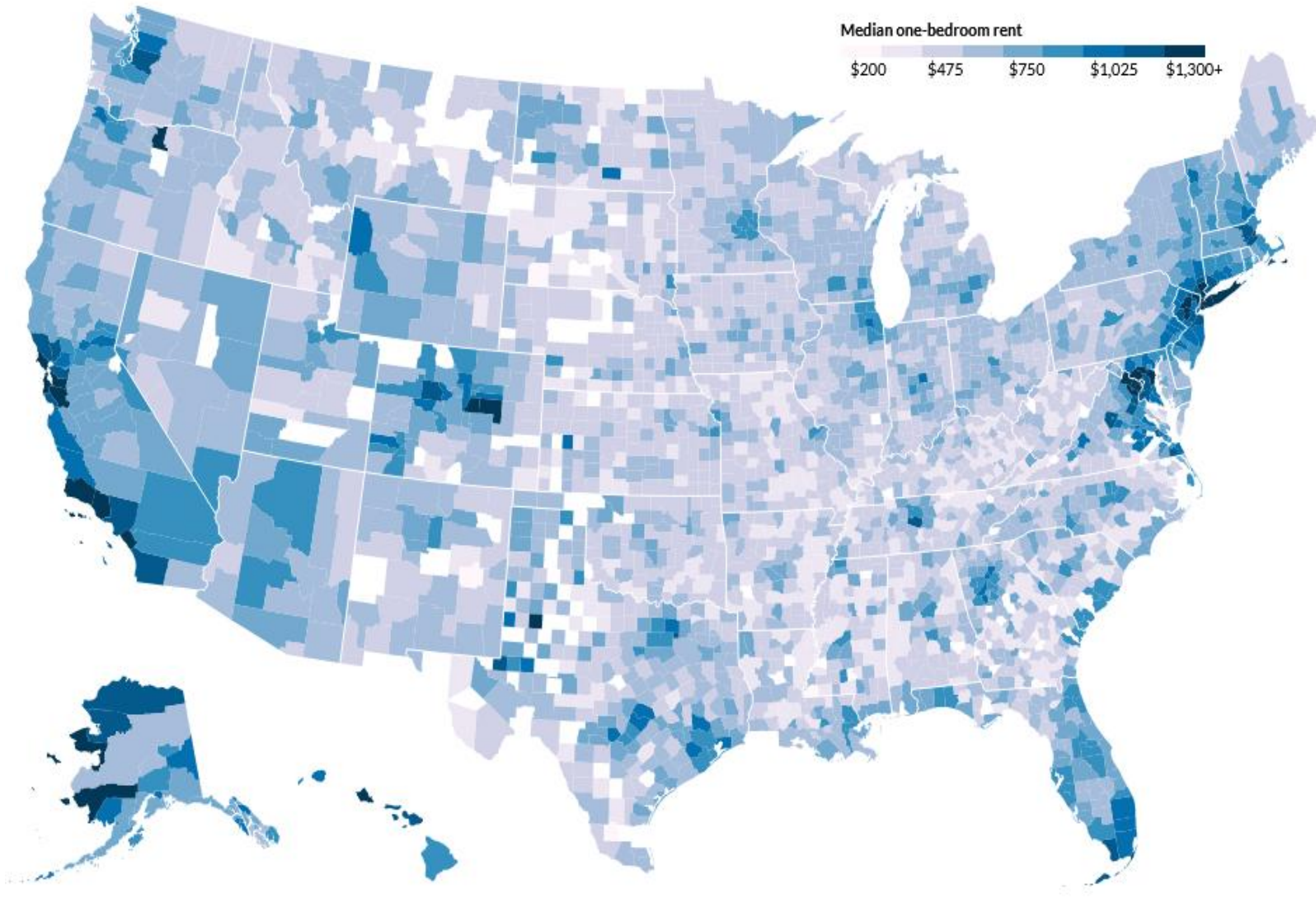


Homeless?

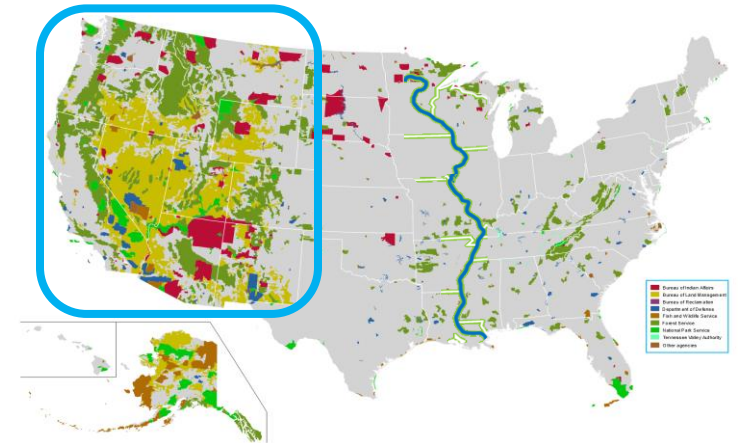
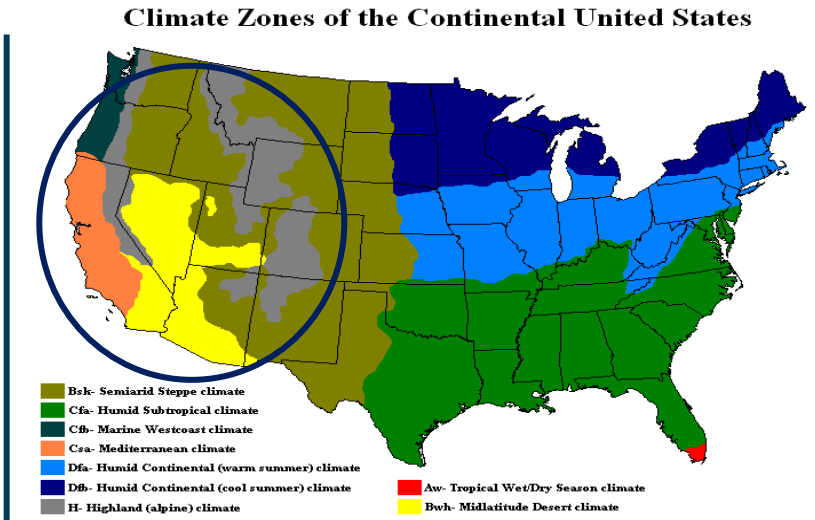
Housing?

Holiday?

# Environmental Conditions for US Vehicle Residency



Median One-Bedroom Rental Costs by County



# Different personal reasons for vehicle residency

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- Incomes too low to afford housing, but too high for assistance and services.
- Legal barriers to employment and housing.
- Multiple chemical sensitivities, social anxiety, PTSD and/or fleeing domestic violence or human trafficking.
- Avoiding separation from family, animal companions or personal property.

# Different personal reasons for vehicle residency

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- Stable housing for traveling laborers, retirees, and families.
- Access to temperate climates for better health and wellness.
- Connecting with people who share values and interests.
- Reconnection with the natural world.

# Similar experiences of vehicle residents

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## Conditions

- Limited and restricted parking
- “The Knock”
- Legal warnings, tickets, tows and impounds
- Risk of theft, vandalism and physical assault
- Social stigmatization and denial of long-term shelter as a “home”

## Needs

- Legal and voluntary space
- Water, toilets, showers & laundry
- Trash & biowaste disposal
- Food, Fuel and Electricity
- Health Care and Wellness
- Community and Social Engagement
- Economic participation and political enfranchisement



Safe Parking Program at Lake Washington United Methodist Church;  
Kirkland, WA

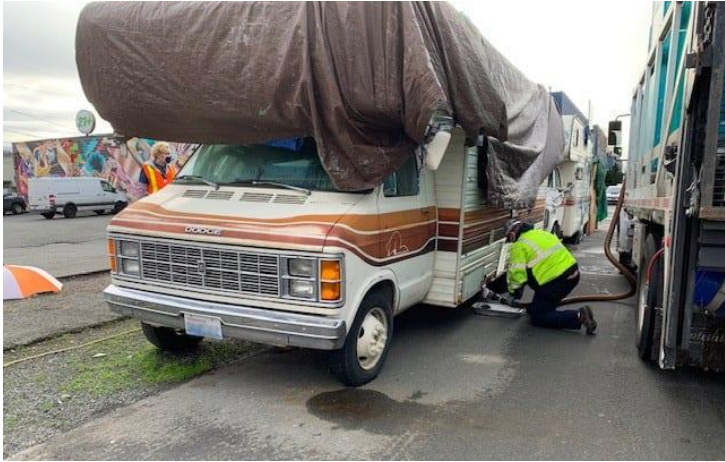
Some people benefit from overnight **Safe Parking Programs** for their passenger vehicles while they rapidly move into emergency housing



Some benefit from  
longer term **Supportive Parking Programs**  
for their larger vehicles while they  
transition into available housing



Supportive RV Parking Program at Santa Teresa VTA Light Rail station; San José, CA



“RV Pumpout Programs”  
Seattle (WA) and Portland (OR)



**EVERY WEEK,** 

BeautifySJ supports residents living in RVs with sanitary services to keep our streets clean. We’ve safely disposed of over **70,000 pounds of biowaste** since July 1.

Beautify San José (CA)  
RV Biowaste Pollution Prevention Program  
(RVP3)

Some folks need **On-site Trash Removal and Biowaste Disposal Services**, and **Mobile Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Facilities** while parking spaces and housing units are developed



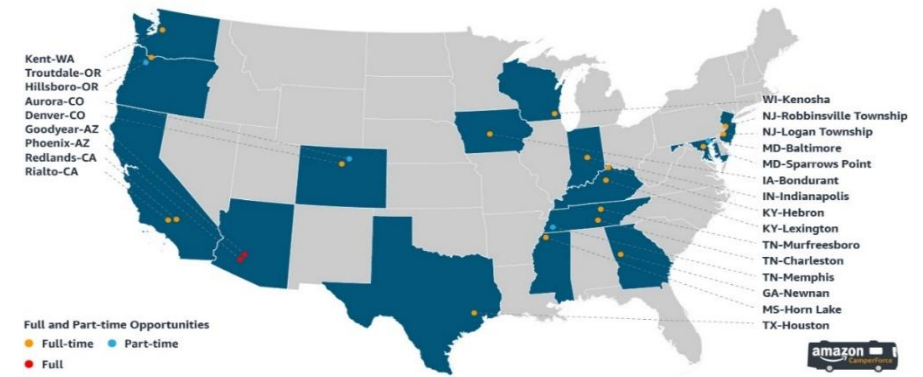
Hope thru Soap Mobile Shower Unit and Closet Bus  
Atlanta (GA)



Community First! Village operated by Mobile Loaves and Fishes; Austin, TX

Some benefit from **Permanent Parking Programs**, like the reported 20 million Americans who rely on **RV or Mobile Home Parks** as *affordable housing*

Some travel regularly as **traveling health professionals** or in seasonal “**workamping**” such as **gate guarding, campground hosting, farming, harvesting, shipping, or at amusement parks, festivals and events**



Amazon “Camperforce” Program that employed RV residents;  
cancelled in 2023



The RV Big Tent Show, a 1-week long event with 2 million attendees in 2025,  
where seasonal industries recruit itinerant labor; Quartzsite, AZ



Trailers located in an RV park at the Beet Harvest; Sidney, MT



2018 Rubber Tramp Rendezvous (RTR) on BLM lands; AZ



2022 Skooliepalooza on BLM lands; AZ

Some happily move between  
**National and State Parks,  
Bureau of Land Management  
(BLM) Open Access Areas, and  
Long-Term Visitor Areas  
(LTVA)**



La Posa South, Long Term Visitor Area; Quartzsite, AZ

# Vehicle Residency

## Short Term



Inhabiting ~100 mile radius for  
1 season or less

Short term and employee parking programs, open-access areas, rest stop amenities

Geographically Untethered

## Medium Term



Inhabiting ~100 mile radius  
between 2 seasons and 1 year

Medium term affordable or employee parking programs, nearby healthcare and hygiene amenities

Geographically Semi-tethered

## Long Term



Inhabiting ~100 mile radius for  
more than 1 year

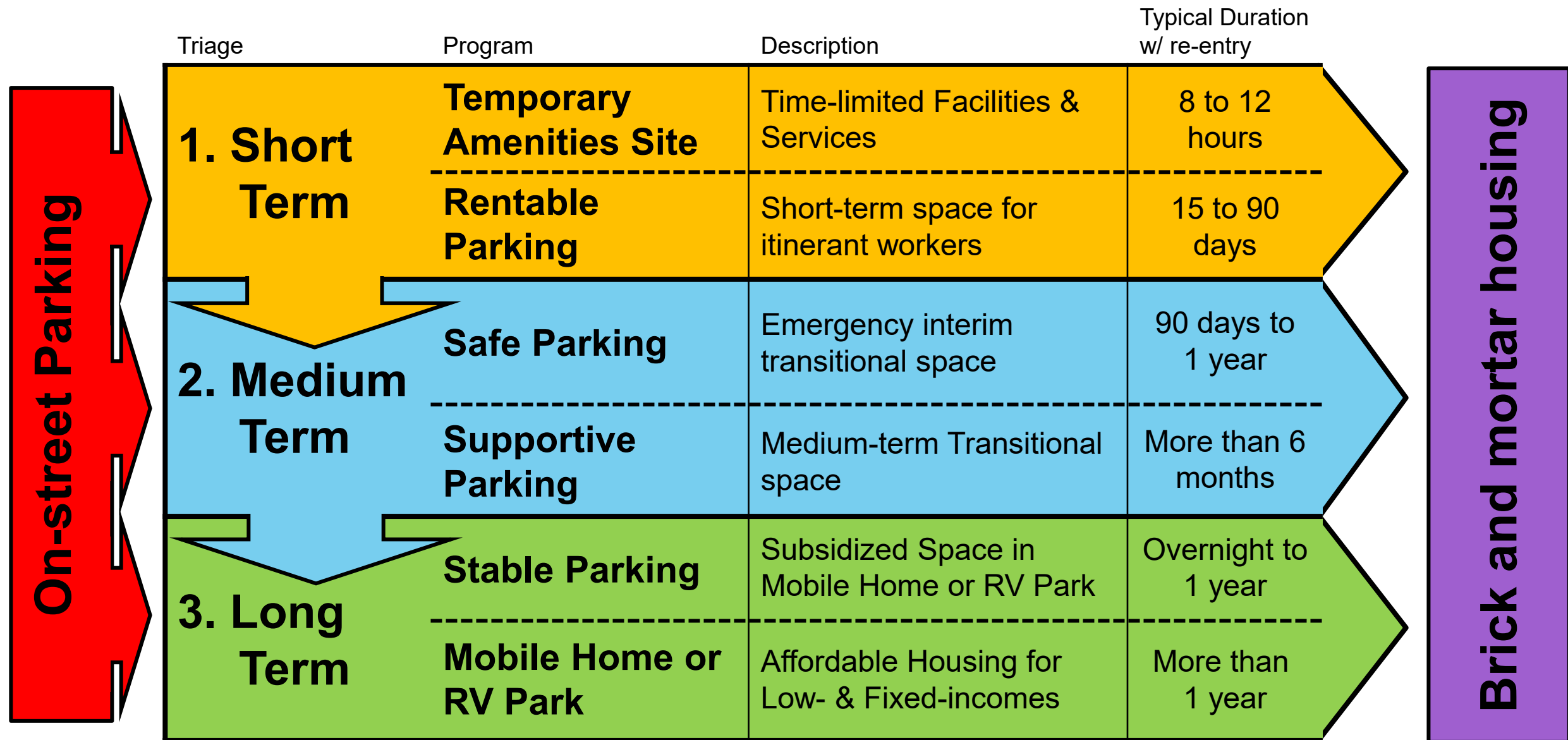
Long term parking programs, social services and employment assistance, on-site (mobile) healthcare and hygiene amenities

Geographically Tethered

## Vehicle Residency Triage Model

|                      | Short-term Amenities & Parking                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Medium-term Parking                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Long-term Parking                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Model                | Temporary Amenities Site                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Rentable, Employee or Medical Parking                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Safe Parking Program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Supportive Parking Program                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Stable Parking Program                                                                                                                                | Mobile Home or RV Park                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Description          | Time-limited Facilities & Services                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Short-term Parking                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Short-term Transitional Parking                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Long-term Transitional Parking                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Subsidized Mobile Home or RV Park                                                                                                                     | Low- & Fixed-income Mobile Home or RV Park                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Comparable Model     | Rest Stop w/ Service Navigation Hub                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Campground or Itinerant Housing                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Emergency Interim Housing                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Transitional Housing                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Permanent & Supportive Housing Voucher                                                                                                                | Affordable Housing                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Duration w/ re-entry | 8-to-12-hour max (i.e., 12-8, 12-12)                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Less than 120 days                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 90 days to 1 year                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | More than 6 months                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Overnight to 1 year                                                                                                                                   | More than 1 year                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Amenities            | <b>Time-limited</b> parking space for vehicle residents with vital resources (e.g., electricity, water, showers, toilets, septic drainage, waste disposal) and access to social services, medical assistance, and housing navigation as needed | <b>Affordable</b> off-street parking space for vehicle residents with vital resources (e.g., electricity, water, showers, toilets, septic drainage, waste disposal). Navigation for social services, medical assistance, and housing as needed | Short-term <b>emergency interim</b> space for vehicle residents with vital resources (e.g., electricity, water, showers, toilets, septic drainage, waste disposal) and access to social services, medical assistance, and housing navigation as needed | Long-term <b>transitional</b> space for vehicle residents with vital resources (e.g., electricity, water, showers, toilets, septic drainage, waste disposal) and access to social services, medical assistance, and housing navigation as needed | A <b>flexible</b> space for vehicle residence with vital resources (waste disposal & WASH) that meets the needs of the population and local community | Long-term <b>leased</b> space for vehicle residence with vital resources (e.g., electricity, water, showers, toilets, septic drainage, waste disposal) and access to social services or medical assistance as needed |

# From Parking to Housing: A Transference Model





# NVRC RESEARCH TEAM

Generating knowledge to support **all vehicle residents**, whether their vehicle is their *ideal home* or a *refuge* when conventional housing is not accessible.

- Graham Pruss, PhD, NVRC Co-founder & Executive Director: conceptualization & methodology
- Ruth Tretter, PhD, RN, NVRC Research Director: project administration, investigation, visualization
- Sam Lutzker, NVRC member: conceptualization & investigation
- Linda Barringer, NVRC member: conceptualization, investigation
- Hector Valtierra, NVRC member: visualization
- Past contributors: Project administration, investigation - Marieke McArthur
- Investigation: Suzanne Hackett-Morgan, Turner Mills, Peyton Howsden, Dawson Santoro, & Jake Hoster

# Point in Time Count Research Collaboration

**How many Continuums of Care report numbers of vehicle residents who are experiencing homelessness?**

**How many vehicle residents experiencing homelessness were reported?**

- Google search for PiT count data published by CoCs in Western States
  - Verification by 2nd researcher
- **Preliminary findings**
- 73 reports were found from 81 CoCs (90%) in 2024 (2023 if not available)
- 34 reported vehicles or vehicle residents (47%)
- Limitations
- Inconsistencies

# Preliminary Findings

- LA CoC = 14,096 vehicle homes x 1.71 multiplier for unsheltered homeless = 23,169

- 33% of unhoused reported in LA CoC lived in vehicles
- 38% of unhoused interviewed in AZ BOS CoC lived in vehicles

| State      | CoC #s | % CoCs Reports Found | Included VR Counts | % Reports with VR Counts | Vehicles or Vehicle Residents | RVs or RV residents |
|------------|--------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Alaska     | 2      | 100%                 | 0                  | 0%                       |                               |                     |
| Arizona    | 3      | 100%                 | 1                  | 33%                      | 561                           |                     |
| California | 44     | 89%                  | 23                 | 59%                      | 37691*                        | 12918               |
| Colorado   | 4      | 100%                 | 1                  | 25%                      | 799                           |                     |
| Hawaii     | 2      | 100%                 | 0                  | 0%                       |                               |                     |
| Idaho      | 2      | 100%                 | 2                  | 100%                     | 629                           |                     |
| Montana    | 1      | 0%                   |                    |                          |                               |                     |
| New Mexico | 2      | 100%                 | 0                  | 0%                       |                               |                     |
| Nevada     | 3      | 100%                 | 1                  | 33%                      | 87                            |                     |
| Oregon     | 8      | 88%                  | 3                  | 43%                      | 453                           |                     |
| Utah       | 3      | 100%                 | 0                  | 0%                       |                               |                     |
| Washington | 6      | 83%                  | 3                  | 60%                      | 2988                          |                     |
| Wyoming    | 1      | 100%                 |                    |                          |                               |                     |
| Totals     | 81     | 90%                  | 34                 | 47%                      | 43208                         | 12918               |

| State      | Included VR Counts |
|------------|--------------------|
| Alaska     | 0                  |
| Arizona    | 1                  |
| California | 23                 |
| Colorado   | 1                  |
| Hawaii     | 0                  |
| Idaho      | 2                  |
| Montana    |                    |
| New Mexico | 0                  |
| Nevada     | 1                  |
| Oregon     | 3                  |
| Utah       | 0                  |
| Washington | 3                  |
| Wyoming    |                    |
| Totals     | 34                 |



Balance of State  
CoCs

Map by  
Hector  
Valtierra

# Recommendation: Lived-In Vehicle Identification System for PiT Counts

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A vehicle is “Lived-In” if it exhibits **THREE of SIX** characteristics:

1. The view through the front to rear windows is blocked
2. The view through the side windows is blocked
3. There is unfrozen condensation in the windows
4. At least one window is partially open
5. Household items are externally attached, such as generators, air conditioners, solar panels, bicycles, or storage containers
6. A large volume of possessions are visible inside or adjacent to the vehicle

Quartzsite, AZ has an official population of 2,413 (2020).

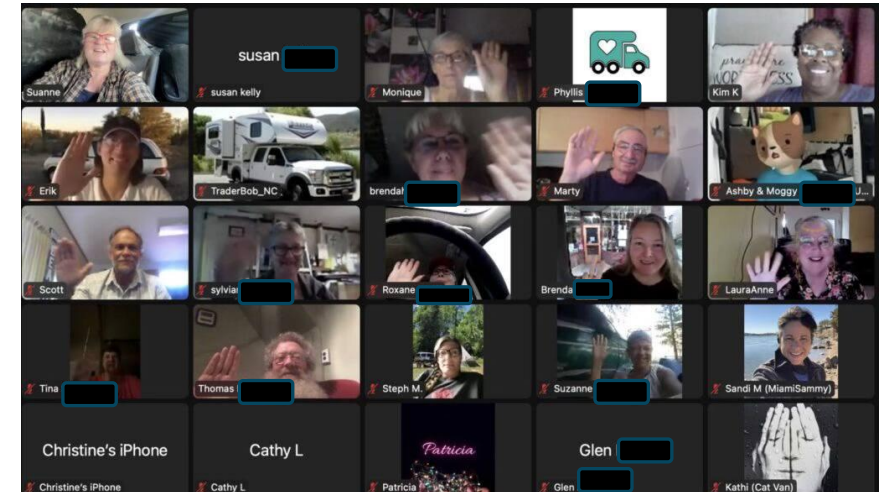
During January, the annual RV show draws around 2 million people

- Many are vehicle residents who park short, medium or long-term in the 11,000 acres of BLM surrounding Quartzsite.
- In 2025, approximately **750,000 people** inhabited these BLM areas during January.
- **Homes on Wheels Alliance** hosts the Rubber Tramp Rendezvous in the town of Quartzsite.



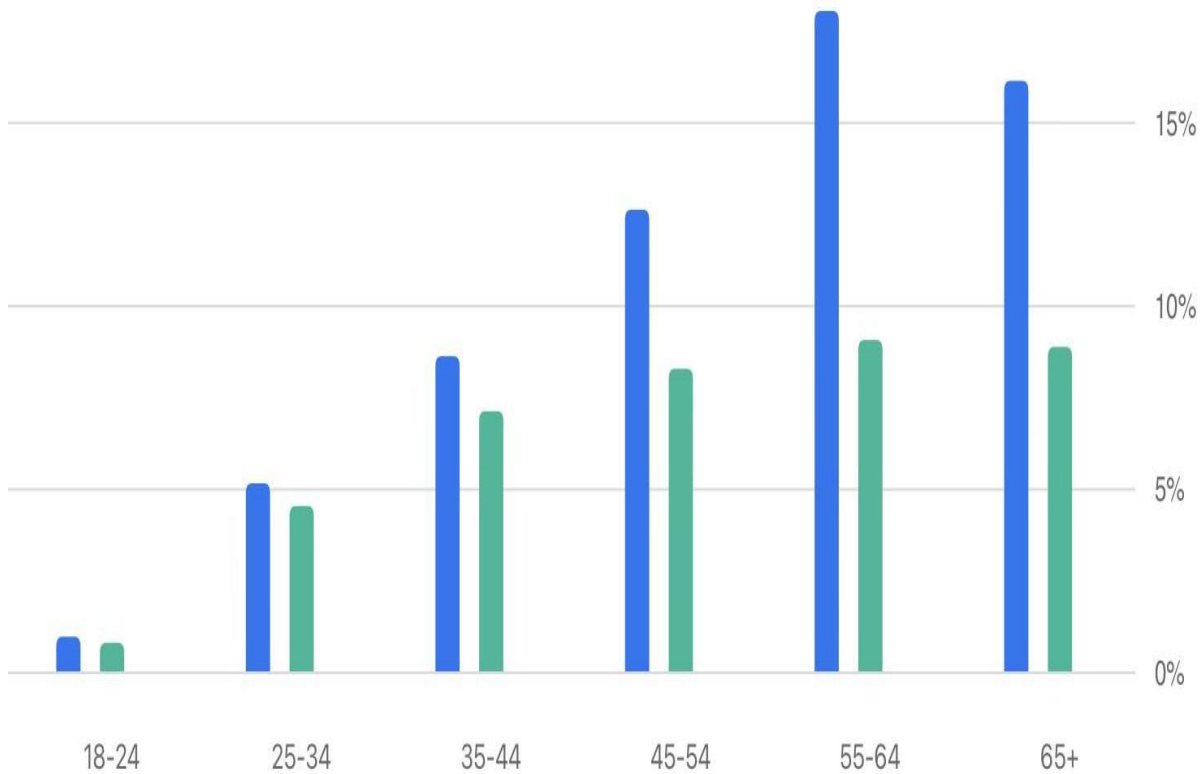
**HOWA** is a national, grassroots community organization that provides mutual aid support for vehicle residents:

- Virtual Caravans
- Facebook Group
- Build Your Own Vehicle Events
- Nomad School
- HOWA Emergency Fund and Support

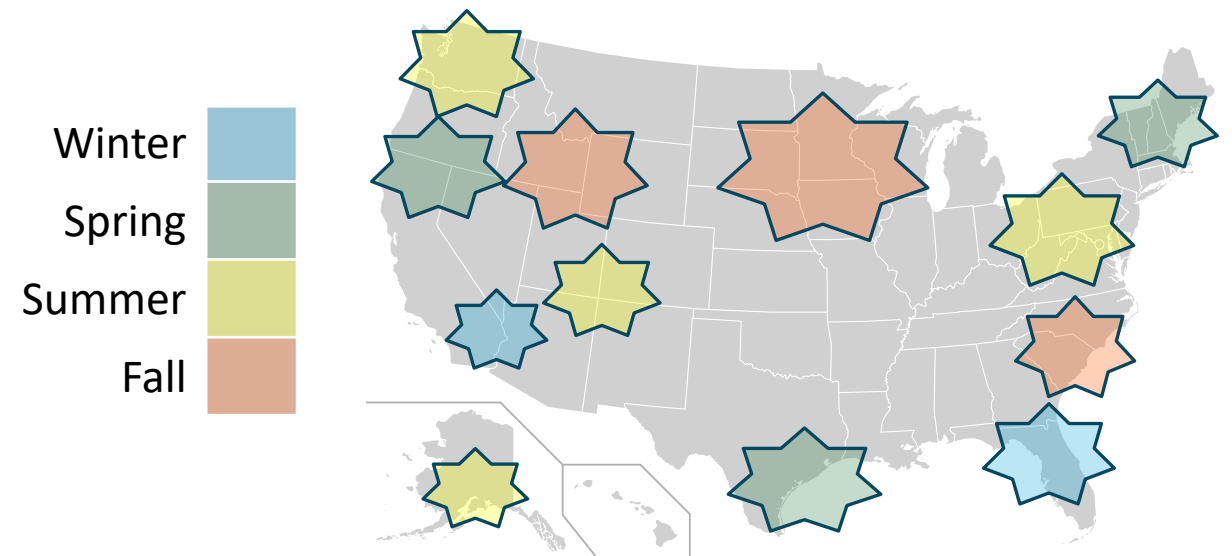


HOWA reports around 90k members, from full-time to part-time, to arm-chair nomads and folks who are “nomad curious.”

- Most of their vehicle resident members are geographically untethered or semi-tethered.



HOWA Age & Gender demographics (n=~86,000)



Common seasonal migration patterns of North American Vehicle Residents

# Venice Justice Committee

## “Keep Moving”: West LA Vehicle Residents Survey



# Acknowledgments

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## **Venice Justice Committee survey team:**

Peggy Lee Kennedy

Sam Lutzker

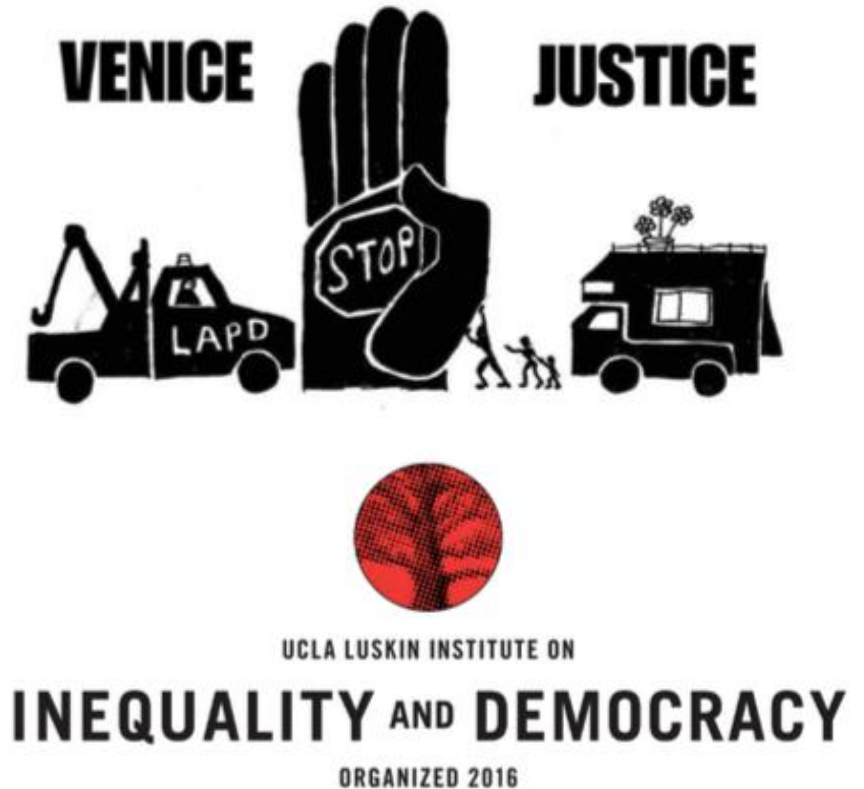
Pat Raphael

Nathan Clukey

Magan Wiles

Veronika Vucetic

Thanks to the UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality & Democracy for supporting this project with a Mellon Foundation Scholar-in-Community Seed Grant.

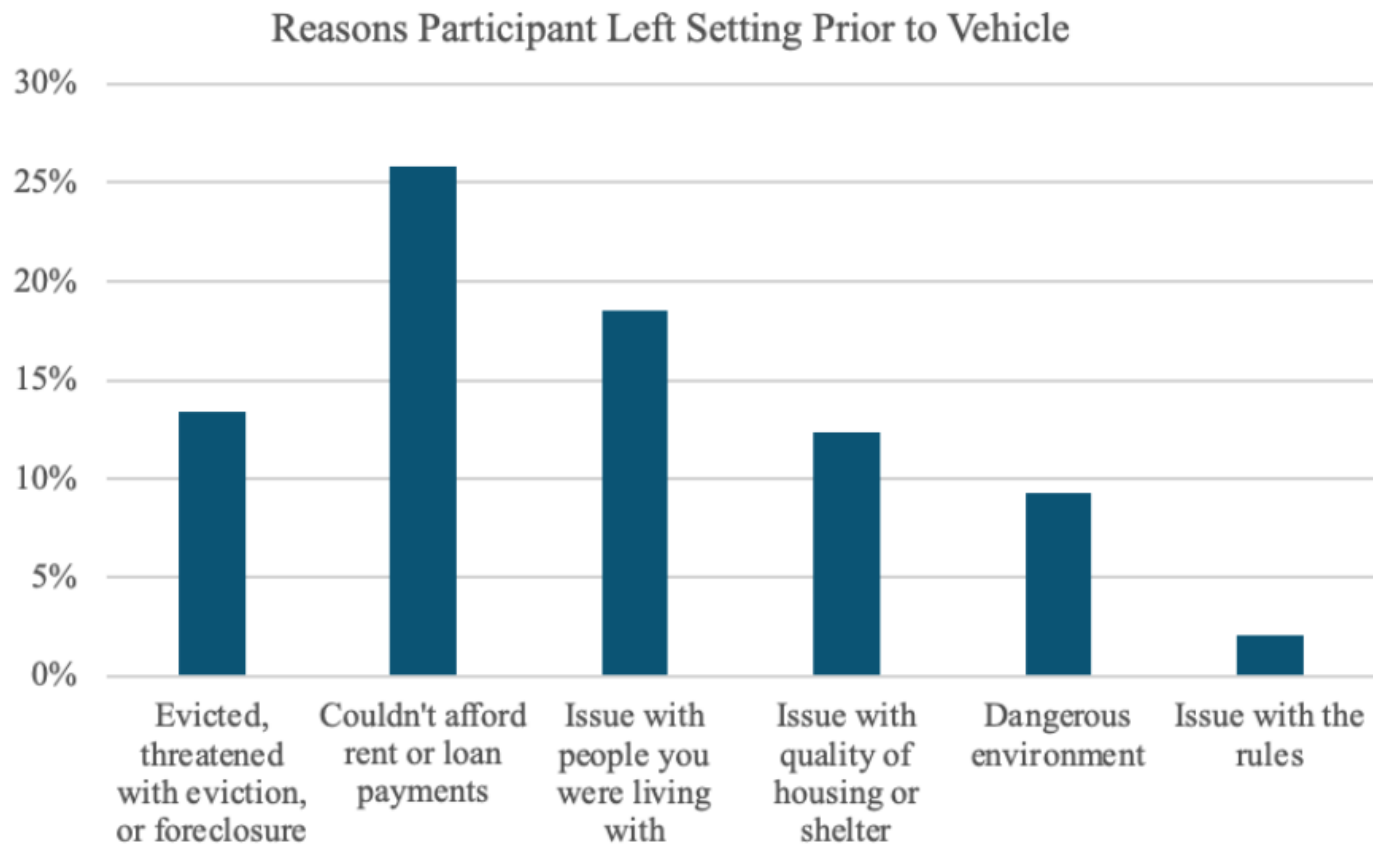


# Survey Methods



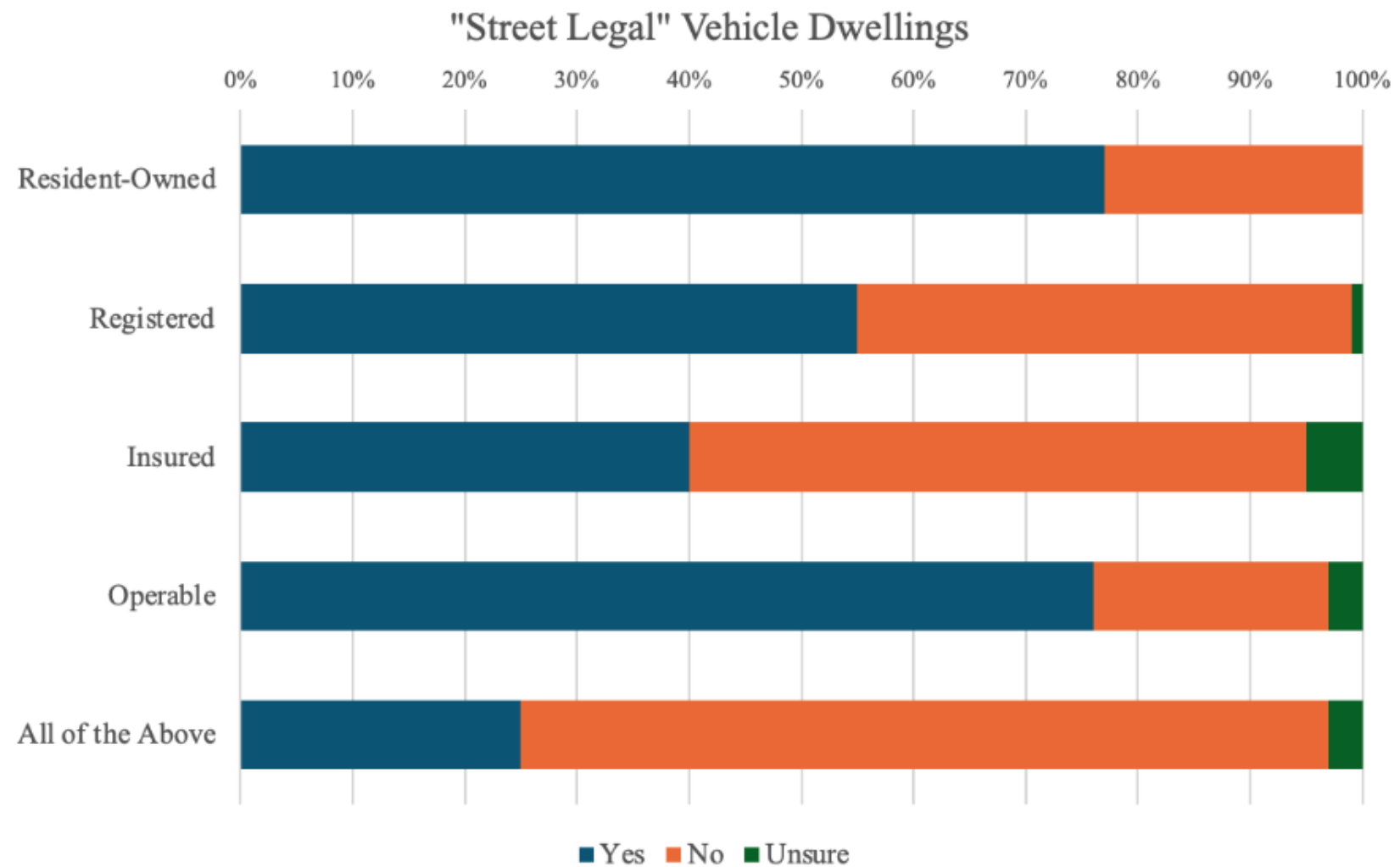
- Survey created between Venice Justice Committee organizers and UCLA researcher
  - Team includes people with lived experience
- Survey methods best practices
  - E.g., Neutrally worded questions
- Sites selected for both convenience and likelihood of targeting with sweeps
  - Focus on visible instances of vehicle residency, mostly daytime sampling
- Face-to-face survey
- Average time to complete: 28 minutes
- \$10 compensation provided *after* survey
- n=99, including 4 former vehicle residents now living on streets who recently lost dwellings

# Vehicle Dwelling as Personal Safety Net



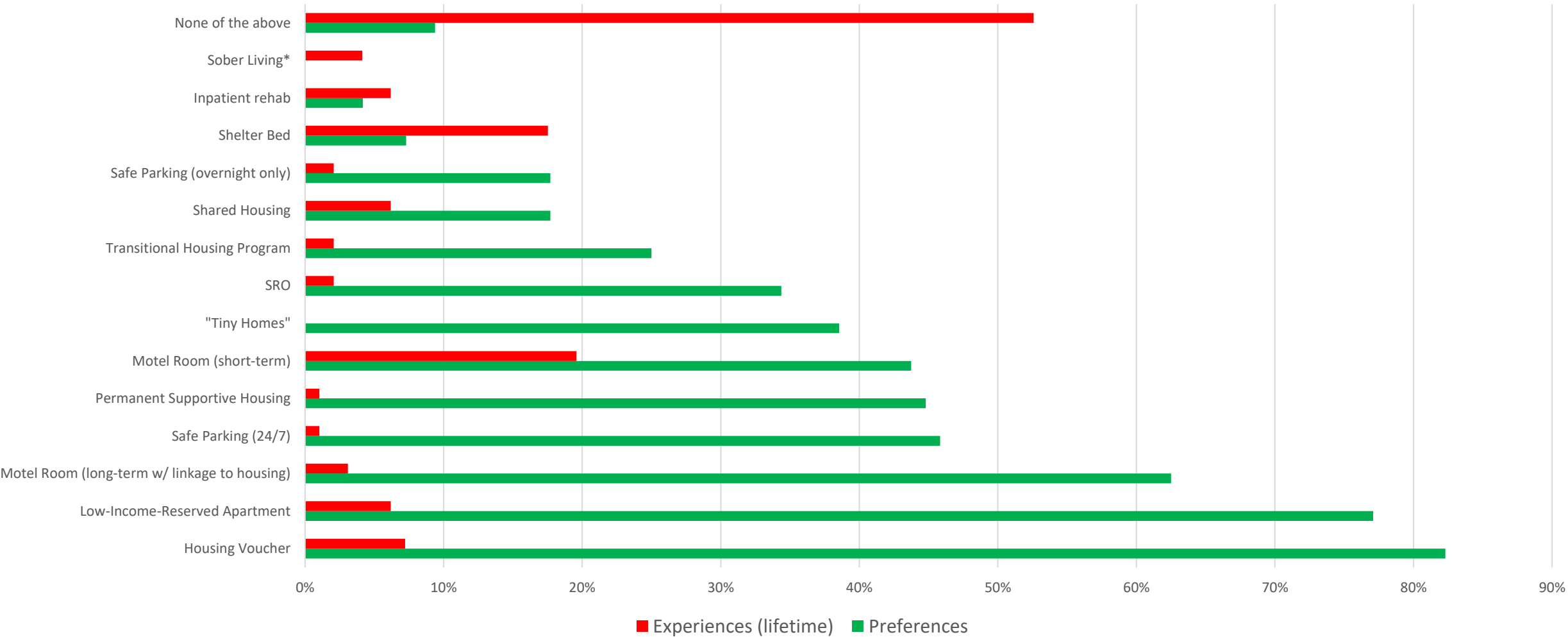
- Prior to vehicle dwelling, 54% of vehicle residents lived in housing they rented, 24% in friend or family member's housing, **12% on streets**, and 9% in housing they owned.
- Affordability, followed by interpersonal issues, housing quality and danger were “push” factors into vehicle residency (see graph on left)
- Over 2/3 cited relative quality or safety of vehicle dwelling as “pull” factors

# Forced Mobility through Criminalization



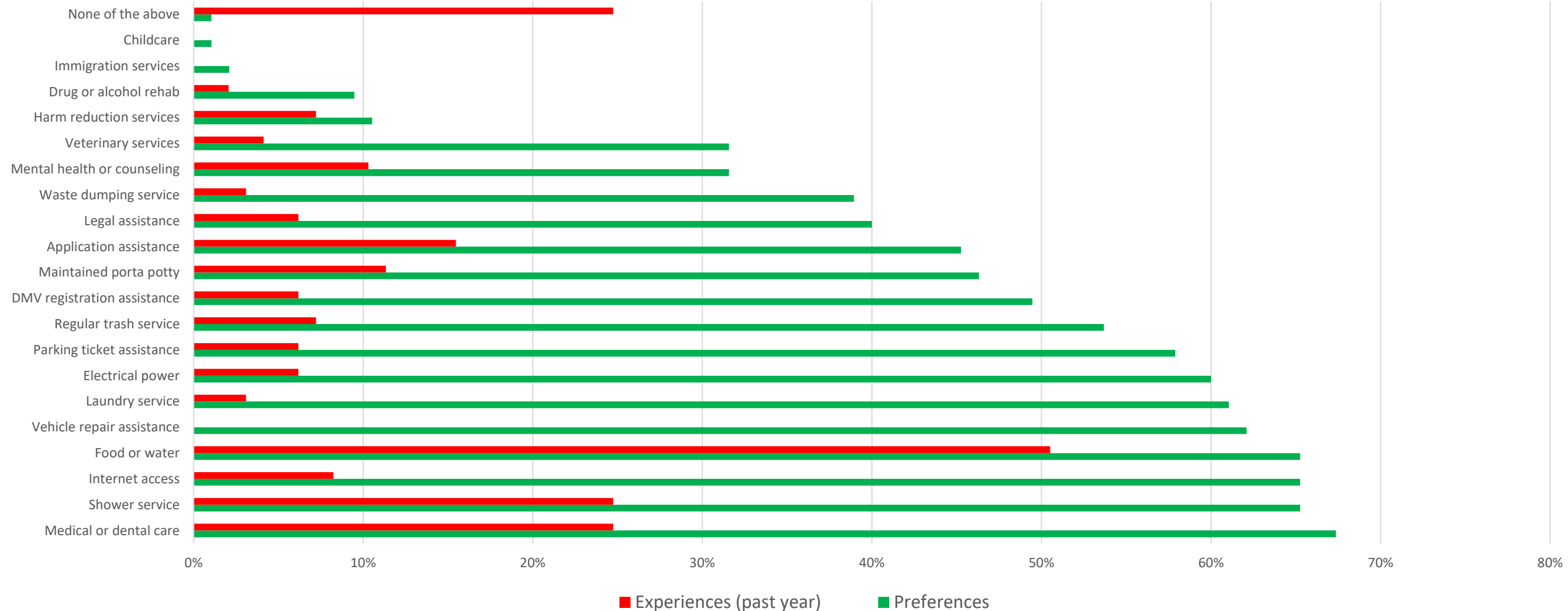
# Parking Stability, Supportive Services, and Affordable Housing

Shelter/Housing Program Experiences (lifetime) vs. Preferences



# Parking Stability, Supportive Services, and Affordable Housing

Social Services Experiences (past year) vs. Preferences



# Report Findings Overview

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1. The Vehicle Dwelling is a Personal Safety Net.
2. Vehicle Residents are Forced into Mobility through Criminalization.
3. Social Services Outreach to Vehicle Residents is Inadequate and Inconsistent.
4. Vehicle Residents Desire Parking Stability, Supportive Services and Affordable Housing.



# Read the Report and Contact Us

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<https://challengeinequality.luskin.ucla.edu/2025/06/25/keep-moving/>

**Contact info:**

- Peggy Lee Kennedy: [venicejusticecommittee@gmail.com](mailto:venicejusticecommittee@gmail.com) | 310-365-0985
- Sam Lutzker: [sal2176@ucla.edu](mailto:sal2176@ucla.edu) | 917-900-7966

# Municipal, State and Federal legal trends



## Criminalization with limited proactive response:

- Citywide overnight and oversized vehicle parking restrictions
- Minimal parking program development

## Unchecked Vigilantism:

- Barricades, planters and “parks” installed by private citizens after a “sweep”
- Cities rarely respond to remove these illegal public obstructions



# Municipal, State and Federal legal trends

## California's *War on RVs*

- (AB 630): Adds text CA Vehicle Code to facilitate seizure of vehicles determined valued at *“four thousand dollars (\$4,000) or less if the vehicle is a recreational vehicle”* (previously, only \$500 or less)

## Tennessee's *Camping Ban*

- *In 2022, “camping” was prohibited on ALL public property that was undesignated for camping under penalty of up to 6 years in prison and a \$3,000 fine.*

## Washington's *Vehicle Residence Protection Bills*

- (HB 1240 & 1653): Provides process to release a vehicle from impound and prevents its auction, if it has been identified as a primary residence at any time. HB 1653 creates process to compensate tow operators for improperly impounded vehicles.
- Supported by WA Legislature Vehicle Residency Task Force, the Towing Recovery Association of Washington, Columbia Legal Services & the National Vehicle Residency Collective



# Washington State Vehicle Resident Rights and Tow Protection (Northwest Justice Project)

## I live in my vehicle. Do I have any rights?

**Yes.** You might have some rights related to living in your vehicle.

**People who live in their vehicle usually have homestead rights.** This means you have a right to claim your vehicle as your primary residence or your “homestead”. If a place is your homestead, you might have protections related to it whether it’s a dwelling **or** a vehicle. Homestead rights are important if you live in your vehicle because they can protect your vehicle-home from being kept to pay for the impound fees.

**If you live in your vehicle, you can use your Homestead Act rights to ask to get your vehicle back.** The Homestead Act is a state law that says that your home can’t be held or sold to pay off your debts. A state Supreme Court case, City of Seattle vs. Long, says that the Homestead Act **includes vehicles that are used as homes**. This means it’s illegal for a tow company **to sell or auction** your vehicle-home from the impound lot to cover the impound and storage fees.

## Can I claim a homestead exemption for my vehicle if I live in it?

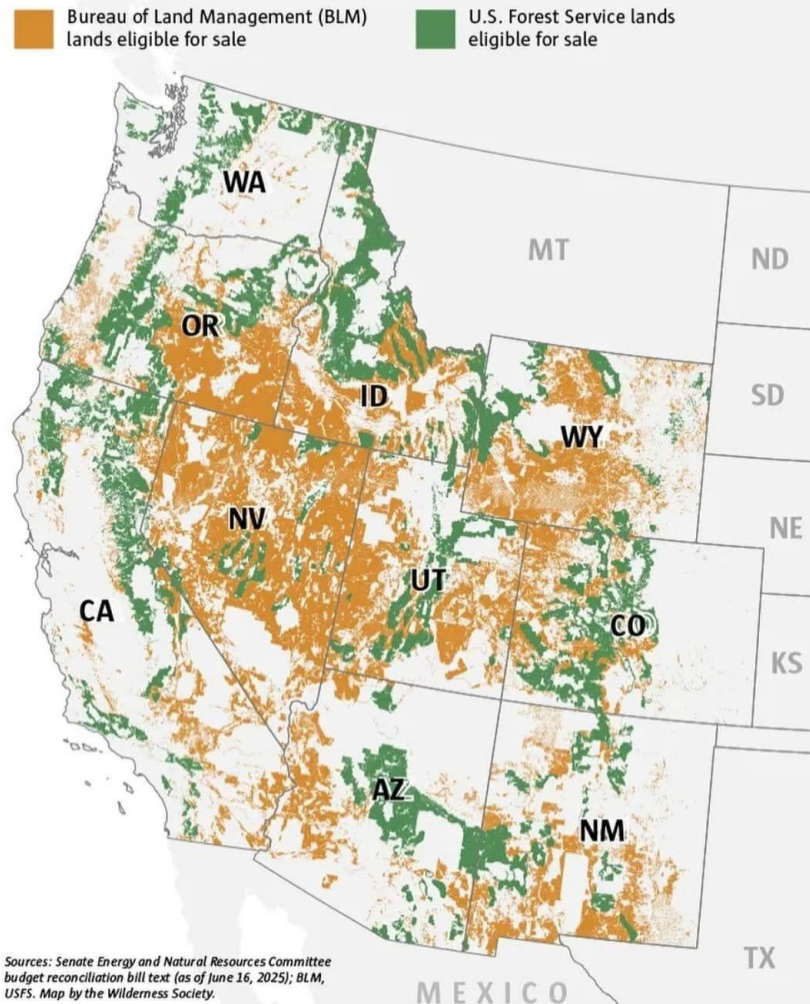
**Yes.** In Washington, a vehicle that you live in as your primary home qualifies for protection from debt collectors. This protection is called a **homestead exemption**. The value of your vehicle up to \$125,000 is protected. Use an [Affidavit of Occupancy](#) to show that your vehicle is your homestead. This form is important. Any time you want to claim your homestead rights, **try to provide this form**.

Learn more about other issues related to living in your vehicle from the [National Vehicle Residency Collective](#). They have a [list about safe places to park](#) that includes Washington state information.

<https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/living-my-vehicle-what-are-my-rights>

# Municipal, State and Federal legal trends

## Public lands at risk of sell-off



Johnson v. Grants Pass SCOTUS ruling (2024)

## Vehicle Residency in PiT Counts

- Need a Subcategory, Specialized Count Direction, and focus in statewide Balances of Care

Housing Not Handcuffs Act (2025)

- June 2025: Rep. Jayapal & Rep. Frost

FEMA revisions re: unhoused people & emergencies

Closure of Federal lands currently inhabited by vehicle residents

- 255 million acres could be sold
- Current halt on 3 million acres within 5 miles of cities (June 24, 2025)

# On May 1, 2025 between 100 and 200 vehicle residents were evicted from the Deschutes National Forest in Bend, Oregon



# The majority were disabled and displaced from local housing. Many worked in nearby Bend.



# During the 48 hours before closure, mutual aid helped people move their homes



No arrests were made.  
No citations were issued.

Advocates helped dozens of  
people relocate their RVs,  
vans, trailers and campers.

Less than 24 people  
remained in the 900 acres.

# At 3am, NFS Law Enforcement barricaded China Hat Road for Fire Management

No housing assistance was present.

Most relocated to a BLM area on the opposite side of town called “Dirt World”

The BLM will close Dirt World at the end of 2026.



# Local, Regional & National Collaboration

Community Advocates are now:

- Connected with national vehicle residency support groups.
- Developing local coalition of support for safe, supportive and stable parking programs in their CoC.
- Building on existing models such as BLM's LTVA, VanAid, HOWA's "Nomad School" and "Virtual Caravans."



By **working together**, we can:

- **Provide alternatives** to criminalization.
- **Develop cost-effective solutions** that meet local needs.
- **Align community responses to lived-in vehicles** with planning to end homelessness.

**Learn more at:**

[www.VehicleResidency.org](http://www.VehicleResidency.org)





# Working with Vehicle Residents

**Dr. Graham J. Pruss**

Executive Director

National Vehicle Residency Collective

# Budget Considerations for Parking Programs

| Consideration                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Fixed                                  | Flexible                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><u>Property</u></b><br>Underutilized properties such as faith-based communities, fairgrounds, malls, campgrounds, open-access, municipal, county, state and federal lands                                                     | Purchased                              | Leased                                                                    |
| <b><u>Infrastructure</u></b><br>Partnerships with businesses and local government agencies such as police, fire, and transportation departments to address amenities and vehicle safety, tow, maintenance, storage, and disposal | Electrical, water, gas and sewer lines | Generators, cisterns, propane tanks and septic vaults or pump-out service |
| <b><u>Basic Amenities</u></b><br>Food, water, toilets, showers, security, fire safety, trash and biowaste disposal                                                                                                               | Permanent structures                   | Mobile Buildings                                                          |
| <b><u>Human Services</u></b><br>Housing assistance and case management, financial assistance for client emergencies, vehicle licensing, registration, repairs, and maintenance for operability and livability                    | In-house case managers                 | Partnerships with local service providers                                 |

# HUD Response to Counting RVs in PiT Counts

## HUD memo on Counting People in vehicles for PiT Counts:



**Method 1 - Census.** Talk to every household sleeping in structures to determine whether they are homeless and how many people are sleeping in that situation.



**Method 2 - Sampling Approach.** Sample each type of sleeping situation and extrapolate based on a sample to determine a PIT count estimate.

1. Identify criteria that can be used to determine when a vehicle might be housing a household experiencing homelessness. These criteria can be factors such as where the vehicle is parked, whether the windows are covered, whether it appears to be full of household belongings and living necessities (e.g., clothing), etc.
2. Establish an approach for count enumerators. ~~For example, knock on the window of every other vehicle.~~ This should be done by more experienced enumerators who can use good judgment about when and how to safely approach a vehicle.
3. ~~Determine how many vehicles that met the criteria for being counted had people in them and in how many of those vehicles people were experiencing homelessness.~~
4. Count all vehicles that meet the criteria for inclusion and then extrapolate based on the data derived from steps 1-3.

# HUD Response to Counting RVs in PiT Counts

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‘Because RVs are “ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation,” HUD does not believe that all persons sleeping in RVs should be included in the PIT count. However, there are several factors that a CoC can consider when determining whether to include occupants of RVs in their unsheltered PIT count data, including:

- the RV is in **disrepair** (e.g., holes, broken windows, flat tires, removed or broken siding);
- the RV **occupants do not have access to sewer, water, and electricity** connections; and
- the RV is **parked in an unusual place**, including non-RV designated lots, non-residential areas, or areas where RVs are not allowed to park, **and the RV is clearly occupied.**’