

Ten residents experiencing homelessness were interviewed at the Goodwill Inn for a listening session on October 29th. The group included 7 women and 3 men, ages ranging from 24 to 82, with about six residents reporting some form of income. The session explored experiences and needs across transportation, safety, legal aid, housing, health services, and community supports, offering a snapshot of day-to-day realities and aspirations.

Participants highlighted the BATA transit system as a cornerstone support. The free loop was described as essential, and several noted that route changes had significantly reduced travel time—up to three hours on some trips. Quick Response Team transportation was also cited as helpful, underscoring the role of mobility in access to services and maintaining routine.

The feedback signals that transportation remains a core enabler of housing stability, employment, and service access. The group's optimism about BATA suggests that any future service redesign should preserve or enhance these capabilities, while ensuring better coordination with other transport supports used by residents.

Participants reported substantial barriers to housing, especially for individuals with criminal records exiting jail. They also identified high housing costs despite vouchers and expressed a desire for models that blend stability with ongoing support, similar to assertive, supportive environments like Dann's House. These insights point to policy and program gaps in eligibility, pricing, and ongoing assistance.

The findings indicate a need for targeted housing advocacy, policy adjustments, and scalable options that can accommodate people transitioning out of custodial settings or managing ongoing behavioral health or addiction concerns. A balanced approach would couple stable housing with accessible support services to sustain long-term housing success.

A clear call emerged for an on-site mental health worker at Goodwill Inn to address behavioral health challenges directly where residents live. The group also urged stronger addiction treatment options beyond Harm Reduction, while acknowledging the value of existing services like Mobile Med and the VA's holistic care approach.

These responses imply a potential for expanding on-site behavioral health capacity and integrating addiction treatment with Harm Reduction frameworks. Establishing clear pathways for counseling,

case management, and discreet access to services would likely improve engagement and outcomes for residents with complex needs.

Harassment concerns were raised by a new resident who felt unheard, highlighting safety and dignity issues within the residential environment. The session underscored the importance of faith-based and community partners—Safe Harbor, Central United Methodist, Jubilee House, and others—as essential sources of basic needs and holistic care. Residents also emphasized broader structural goals: more housing options, improved outreach, better communication from case workers, and strengthened cross-sector collaboration to reduce barriers to stability and promote permanent housing. Finally, participants expressed a need to rebuild credit, the desire to return to school, and to find ways to improve family-reunification pathways in the longer term.