

# **The Community Cost of Chronic Homelessness**

A White Paper for the City of Lincoln Continuum of Care

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# Introduction

After years of decline, there have been increasing rates of chronic homelessness across the United States, with 138,361 persons experiencing chronic homelessness on a single night in 2022 (HUD, 2022). The City of Lincoln and Lancaster County are not immune to this phenomenon and have also seen steadily increasing rates of chronic homelessness.

This is a three-part report on chronic homelessness in Lincoln and the cost associated with this issue. In the first part of the report, we provide an overview of chronic homelessness, describe the state of chronic homelessness in Lincoln, trends, and a description of the people experiencing chronic homelessness. In part two of the report, we provide an overview of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and the housing first approach consistently found to be the most effective housing approach and program to end chronic homelessness, and a review of the research and evaluation literature with a focus on the cost savings to communities in providing PSH for the chronic population. In part three of the report, we provide an analysis of the costs to the acute and emergency services system in Lincoln associated with 24 persons experiencing chronic homelessness in Lincoln and the potential averted costs to the Lincoln community if the same individuals had access to a housing first, permanent supportive housing program.

### Part I: Chronic Homelessness

Chronic Homelessness refers to those persons that have experienced continuous homelessness for an extended period of time or that are frequently entering into homeless situations over a long period of time and have a disabling condition such as serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or physical disability. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the primary federal agency focused on Homelessness and the source of most financial resources in Lincoln and Lancaster County to address Homelessness, defines chronic Homelessness as:

- A homeless individual with a disability as defined in section 401(9) of the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11360(9)), who:
  - o Lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter, and
  - Has been homeless and living as described for at least 12 months\* or on at least 4 separate
    occasions in the last 3 years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least 12 months and
    each break in Homelessness separating the occasions included at least 7 consecutive nights of not
    living as described.
- An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility for less, including jail, substance abuse
  or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility, for fewer than 90 days and met all of
  the criteria of this definition before entering that facility\*\*; or
- A family with an adult head of household (or, if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household)
  who meets all of the criteria of this definition, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while
  the head of household has been homeless.
  - \*A "break" in homeless is considered to be 7 or more nights.

The HUD definition of chronic homelessness is used in this report, and all data on chronic homelessness in this report is for persons meeting this definition.

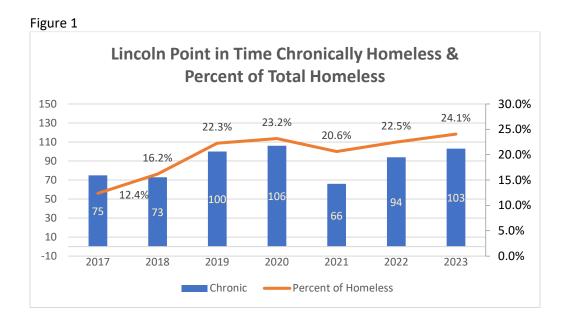
<sup>\*\*</sup>An individual residing in an institutional care facility does not constitute a break in Homelessness.

#### **Chronic Homelessness in Lincoln**

Over the past decade, the number of individuals experiencing homelessness on any given night in the City of Lincoln has decreased significantly. On a single night in January of 2012, there were 981 persons compared to 429 on a single January night in 2023. Annually, the number of households experiencing homelessness since 2018 has decreased by seven percent (7%). This achievement in the reduction in the number of persons experiencing homelessness is a result of significant federal, state, city, and county resource investments. This achievement is also the result of a network of community-based providers' efforts in improved outreach, shelter, and housing programming, and improved homeless service system policies and processes, including a system based on the housing first approach<sup>1</sup> and the All Doors Lead Home homeless coordinated entry system<sup>2</sup>.

While the overall number of people experiencing homelessness in the City of Lincoln has decreased, the total number and percentage of people experiencing chronic homelessness has increased over this same period. Based on a single night, Point in Time Count, in Lincoln, individuals experiencing chronic Homelessness were 12.4% of the homeless population in 2017 and 24% in 2023 (See Figure 1.)

Annual data are consistent with single-night count trends. In 2022, 22% of all persons experiencing Homelessness in Lincoln were chronic. These data are consistent with national trends regarding the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness. According to the State of Homelessness: 2023 Edition by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, chronic homelessness reached record highs in 2022 and represented 22% of all persons experiencing Homelessness. (Homelessness, 2022)

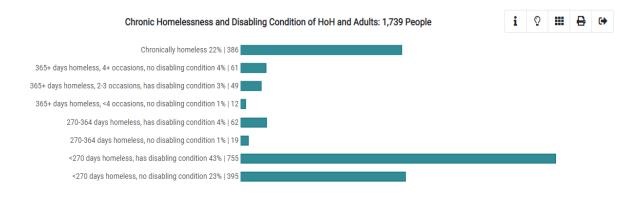


<sup>1</sup> Appendix A – City of Lincoln Continuum of Care Housing First Policy – CoC/ESG Written Standards - 2021

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://ccfl.unl.edu/community-services-management/coordinated-entry/lincoln

In addition to the number of persons in Lincoln meeting the HUD definition of chronic homelessness, there is a large and growing percentage of the population that meets the duration and occasions criteria but have no verified disabling condition or that have a disabling condition without fully meeting the time/duration component of the chronic definition. These two subsets, in 2022, were an additional 184 persons, an additional 12% of the population experiencing homelessness, see Figure 2. With either a verified disability or more time or occasions homeless, these subpopulations increase the chronic and "near" chronic homeless populations to 34% of all persons experiencing Homelessness in Lincoln

Figure 2



# **Part II Economic Impact of Chronic Homelessness**

## **Economic Impact of Chronic Homelessness**

Hospital/Emergency Service System Costs

Homelessness is associated with poor physical and mental health (Kushel, 2015). Further, individuals experiencing chronic homelessness often have complex physical and or mental conditions but often struggle to access primary care. Thus, when they seek care, their condition may need more intensive treatment (Schanzer et al., 2007). For example, individuals experiencing homelessness are five times more likely to be admitted to inpatient care and stay an average of 4 days longer (Health Research and Educational Trust, 2017). In addition to having more health conditions requiring care, individuals experiencing homelessness also tend to utilize more costly acute health services rather than lower-cost preventative care (Health Research and Educational Trust, 2017; Kushel, 2015). Individuals experiencing homelessness are three times more likely to use the emergency department and often have repeated visits (Kushel, Vittinghoff, Haas 2001). The experience of homelessness creates many barriers to accessing regular health care; thus, when individuals do seek care, it is often through more costly acute services. Hospital systems have begun to recognize the role housing plays in health and healthcare and have started providing housing as a means of treatment to frequent hospital users who are chronically homeless (Health Research and Educational Trust, 2017). The University of Illinois Health system found that by providing housing through a housing first program to the top hospital users, they reduced participants' healthcare costs by 67% and saw a 35% reduction in emergency department visits.

Multiple studies have found that health-related services account for over 50% of all acute and emergency services costs of those experiencing chronic homelessness (Flaming et al., 2016, Wu et al., 2016).

# Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice System Costs

There are many laws and ordinances against activities individuals experiencing homelessness may engage in as a means of survival, such as sleeping in public places, loitering, panhandling, etc. This results in these individuals having frequent contact with law enforcement. The city of Denver recently reported an example of one individual who had 24 contacts with police in a 90-day period, resulting in \$4,000 in criminal justice-related costs. Similarly, the California Policy Lab found individuals experiencing homelessness had an average of 21 law enforcement contacts in a 6-month period. Individuals experiencing homelessness are also more likely to spend time in jail and often end up spending time in jail for minor offenses that typically would not result in jail time because they are unable to make their court date and or pay associated fees and fines (Rountree et al., 2019).

The homelessness – jail cycle is significant and costly. The City of Denver found that persons experiencing homelessness accounted for \$65 million in jail costs and \$5.6 million in booking fees during one year. (Urban Institute, 2020).

Law enforcement officers also interact with individuals experiencing chronic homelessness when responding to psychiatric and substance use-related crises. De-escalating and transporting individuals to a psychiatric care facility or public detox center can take significant time and resources from law enforcement. It is not uncommon for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness to cycle through the streets, jail, detox, and psychiatric units (Wu et al., 2016).

# Other Acute Care and Service System Costs

Other services and systems, in addition to health and law enforcement and criminal justice service capacity, are economically impacted by those experiencing chronic homelessness, including mental health services, detoxification and substance use services, public parks and recreation, public safety, and transportation systems, and of course the emergency shelter and street outreach services. While healthcare costs typically represent 50% or more of all acute system costs, as many studies have identified, the costs to these systems are significant. (Larimer, et al 2009; Kuehn, 2012; Gillespie, et al 2021)

### **Permanent Supportive Housing and Housing First**

Given chronic homelessness's high social and economic costs, communities have sought to identify improved solutions. Traditionally, homelessness was approached from a treatment-first lens, focusing on making individuals "housing ready." Under this approach, intervention efforts are focused on addressing an individual's mental health and substance use challenges. Researchers and service providers have recently found that treatment is more effective if individuals are first provided housing. "Housing First" recognizes stable housing as a basic human need, and under this model, individuals are offered voluntary support services but are also provided housing regardless of their participation in other support services. Housing first programs are effective, with decades of robust research finding that

housing first programs significantly reduce rates of homelessness and increase long-term housing stability (Peng et al., 2020).

There is variation among housing first interventions depending on the level of support the individual needs. Most individuals experiencing homelessness will only need temporary support and do well in Rapid Rehousing programs, which provide temporary tenant-based rental assistance (24 months or less). Rapid Rehousing programs focus on quickly providing individuals with housing and then providing support services to help the individuals work towards self-sustainability. However, policymakers and service providers recognize that a segment of the population experiencing homelessness requires ongoing support in order to maintain housing due to complex physical, developmental, substance use, or mental health disabilities.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs are designed to provide long-term stable housing to individuals with these disabling conditions who are unlikely to sustain housing without financial and supportive services. In addition to housing support, participants are offered voluntary support services. There is a strong evidence base for PSH and studies across the US have demonstrated that PSH significantly increases participants' housing stability and quality of life (Peng et al., 2020). PSH has previously been credited with reducing chronic homelessness in the United States by 30% from 2007 to 2014 (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2017) and increasing long-term (6 years) housing stability (Aubry et al., 2020).

The City of Lincoln Continuum of Care housing programs all operate using a housing-first approach and the CoC housing-first standards are provided in Appendix A. The City of Lincoln Continuum of Care housing inventory as of June 2023 includes 305 units of Permanent Supportive Housing, of which 170 are reserved for U.S. Military Veterans. The Lincoln CoC PSH utilization rate consistently exceeds 90% of all available units. As of June 20<sup>th,</sup> 2023, 177 persons experiencing homelessness were prioritized for PSH and without PSH housing availability.

# Research and Evaluations on Averted Costs with Permanent Supportive Housing

As the evidence base for PSH as a successful housing program has grown (Aubry et al., 2020), communities are also examining the impact of PSH on averting acute care system costs. PSH requires significant upfront costs that vary depending on the population focus and the specific case management model used. Jacob's meta-analysis identified a median cost of PSH intervention of \$16k (Jacob et al., 2022). Despite this significant program cost, most evaluations and research finds that PSH participants dramatically reduce their acute/emergency service use, and thereby the costs associated with the use of those services are typically offset through PSH. The National Alliance to End Homelessness (2017) reports that, on average acute/emergency services for an individual experiencing chronic homelessness cost \$35,578 per year and that PSH reduces service costs by an average of 49.5%

The research examining the community cost of chronic homelessness and the cost benefits resulting from the provision of permanent supportive housing is significant, growing, and compelling. Table 1 below lists research studies and meta-analyses that have examined this issue and their major findings over the past decade. This listing is not comprehensive of all studies showing cost savings or an "averted" cost to the system. It is important to note that studies vary in cost offsets included; for

example, some studies only looked at the reduction in healthcare costs, while other studies include criminal justice and other social service costs. Full references for each are found in the Bibliography.

Table 1 Partial list of Research/Evaluations on Permanent Supportive Housing and Averted Acute Care Systems Costs

Study/Author	Year	Findings
Impact of Indiana Permanent Supportive	2013	
Housing	2013	3373 134431311 11114113113113
Housing		• 78% reduction in med. hospitalizations
		66% reduction in ER visits
2	2222	62% reduction in MH hospitalizations
Permanent Supportive Housing with	2022	Meta-analysis of 17 studies
Housing First: Findings from a Community		Median cost saving of \$18,247 per person per year.
Guide (Jacob et al.)		Benefit-to-cost ratio of 1.80:1
Breaking the Homelessness-Jail Cycle with	2021	34% reduction in police contacts compared to the control
Housing First: Results from the Denver		40% reduction in arrests over the control group
Supportive Housing Social Impact Bond		38 fewer days in jail than the control group
Initiative (Cunningham et al.)		
Housing First Is Associated with Reduced	2014	54% reduction in the number of EMS contacts two years
Use of Emergency Medical Services		post PSH
(Mackelprang et al.)		
Cost-Effectiveness of Housing First	2019	Net cost reduction of 46% post-PSH
Intervention with Intensive Case		
Management (Latimer et al.)		
Getting Home: Outcome from Housing	2016	• \$46,895 (gross) annual costs avoided after entry into PSH,
Hight Cost Homeless Hospital Patients,		\$31,736 (net)
(Flaming et al.)		For every \$1 spent in PSH the first year \$2 in public costs
		avoided the first year and \$6 in every year after
Ending Chronic Homelessness Saves	2017	Community costs reduced on average by 49.5% after PSH
Taxpayers Money (National Alliance to		
End Homelessness)		
Housing is Health Care (Bausch, et al.)	2021	Average health care costs for chronic homeless with
		chronic mental illness per person per year were \$54,978
Ability Housing – The Solution that Saves	2018	58% decrease in overall hospital costs
		43% decrease in emergency room costs
		59% decrease in cost for in-patient services
		65% reduction in costs for arrests and jail bookings
		72% reduction in jail costs
New Path Community Housing – Annual	2019	63% reduction in medical and criminal justice service
Evaluation		utilization
		\$1.3m annual savings and cost avoidance for 57 residents
		(\$22k PPPY)
Twelve-Month Client Outcomes and	2009	Quarterly health cost estimates declined by 50%, from
Service Use in a Multisite Project for		\$6,832 to \$3,376 post PSH
Chronically Homelessness Adults (Mares,		Ţ -, to Ţo,o. o poot. o
et al)		
Health Care and Public Service Use and	2009	53% cost reduction for housed participants relative to wait-
Costs Before and After Provision of		list controls
Housing for Chronically Homeless Persons		
With Severe Alcohol Problems		
Supportive Housing in Illinois: A Wise	2009	High utilizer cost savings was \$73,000 per person per year.
Investment		39% reduction in total cost of services pre to post PSH
		<ul> <li>Average savings of \$2,414 per resident, per year</li> </ul>

Highlighting the meta-analysis conducted by Jacob et al. 2023 of 17 U.S. studies and evaluations, the median intervention cost per person per year (PPPY) was \$16,873, with a range from \$15,651 to \$25,567, and the median total benefit from averted costs PPPY was \$28,729 with a range from \$17,061 to \$36,014. Healthcare averted costs represented over 61% of the median averted costs across all studies. The significant component that healthcare costs contribute to overall averted costs is important for the analysis of the City of Lincoln data that follows where healthcare costs data were significantly unavailable.

# Part III: Cost of Chronic Homelessness and Cost Reductions Through Permanent Supportive Housing in Lincoln

### Cost of Chronic Homelessness in Lincoln

UNL-CCFL, for this report, identified the chronic homeless population in the City of Lincoln, the acute services used by this population and the associated costs. This study is to assist the Lincoln Continuum of Care (CoC) in the identification of service and needs gaps in the CoC and inform policy and resource allocation moving forward.

#### Method

Sample

The method used to identify the persons in this study started with the administrative data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Over 300 persons experiencing chronic homelessness from 2020 through 2022 were identified in the HMIS. A survey of service providers, including street outreach, law enforcement, mental health providers, and shelters, identified persons experiencing chronic homelessness that were perceived or known to be high-service system users. Additionally, data identifying the 100 highest-priority individuals from the Coordinated Entry System housing prioritization by name list was used to generate the initial sample.

Cross references across these three data sources were conducted to identify chronic homeless, identified by at least two service providers, and prioritized on the coordinated entry by-name list. This process generated a list of 65 individuals.

These 65 individuals were then rank ordered based on their Coordinated Entry priority score. Coordinated entry prioritization is based on the <u>Lincoln Common Assessment</u>, a self-report tool that measures a person's acuity of need. The common assessment includes the length of time homeless, disabling conditions, health (physical and mental), and self-reported risk behaviors, visits to the ER (self-report), contact with law enforcement.

This list was further trimmed to 24 persons<sup>3</sup> that were the highest coordinated entry priority ranked and identified by at least two service providers as significant users of the acute care systems. These 24 persons were used as the population for the collection of service cost data.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 24 persons were selected as the City of Lincoln's HOME-ARP plan calls for the development of 24 units of permanent supportive housing.

The demographic characteristics of the 24 chronically homeless, high acute care system utilizers reflect the overall chronic homeless population in Lincoln and nationwide: all are single, and 22 of the 24 (98%) are male. The average age is 48 years, ranging from 39 to 66 years.

Racial minorities are over-represented among the 24 chronically homeless individuals identified as top utilizers. According to the 2022 U.S. Census, most Lincoln residents were white (82.8%). While an estimated 4.1 % of individuals identified as Black, 5.9% identified as multi-racial, and less than 1% identified as Native American/American Indian. In contrast, among the group of 24 individuals identified, 16.7% identified as American Indian, 12.5% identified as Black, 12.5% identified as multi-racial, and 54% identified as White.

Seventy percent (70%) have a high school education or GED. Two individuals, or 8%, are U.S. Military veterans. All have a disabling condition of long duration, specifics of which are listed in Table 2. The majority have multiple disabilities.

Table 2

Disabling Condition	Percent
Chronic Health Condition	30%
<b>Developmental Disability</b>	12.5%
HIV/AIDs	4.2%
Mental Health Disability	75%
Physical Disability	33%
Substance Use Disorder	91.6%
Dual Diagnosis (MH and SU)	71%

Eight of the 24 (33%) have some cash income, all from Supplemental Security Income (SSI). None of the remaining 16 report income from any source. The total income from SSI ranges from \$609 to \$1,200 per month. Seven of the 24 (29%) received a non-cash benefit from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Forty-two percent (42%) self-report they have health insurance coverage, all through Medicaid.

# **Acute Care System Utilization and Cost Data**

The list of 24 persons was provided to multiple acute and emergency services providers in the city and county with the request to provide data on the number of services used by each individual over the past three years ending December of 2022. Additionally, each service provider's average or standard cost per service was requested; see Table 3 below. UNL-CCFL HMIS analyst also reviewed each individual's Homeless Management Information (HMIS) case notes<sup>4</sup> for records of acute or emergency services documented within the HMIS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See Appendix B – Example of HMIS Case notes

#### Data Collection

For several service providers, data could not be provided to UNL-CCFL for the study due to HIPAA regulations, e.g., fire and rescue and healthcare services. For these systems and services, UNL-CCFL staff reviewed case notes recorded within the HMIS and entered as part of outreach or case management documentation, i.e., shelter staff recording an individual exiting the shelter to the destination of a hospital; outreach staff recording an individual transported to hospital via ambulance from street, see Appendix B for an example of the case notes reviewed. *Therefore, system utilization and costs for these services are a significant undercount and estimate of actual use and costs. Not every such instance is known to outreach and case management staff, nor is it required to be recorded in the HMIS case notes.* 

Acute care services used in this study, the source for the data, and the cost per service are listed in Table 3. Cost per unit of service or instance for each system provider was obtained, including from services/systems in which individual data were unavailable, e.g., Hospitals, Emergency Room, Fire and Rescue.

Table 3

System/Service	Data Source/s	Cost per service
Emergency Shelter nights	HMIS data	\$30 per night
Homeless Outreach days	HMIS data	\$7 per day
Lancaster County Corrections nights	Lancaster County	\$115 per night
Lincoln Police Department	City of Lincoln	Actual costs for classification
classifications		
Lancaster County General Assistance	Lancaster County	Actual \$ of assistance provided
Crisis Assistance/Crisis Centers	Combination of provider	Variable from \$220 to \$453 per day
	data and HMIS Case	depending upon the type of service
	notes	
Lincoln Fire and Rescue (ambulance)	HMIS Case Notes	\$1,400 per LV2 transport (mid-level
		transport cost)
Emergency Room Visits	HMIS Case Notes	\$2,000 per (range \$750 to \$3,000)
Hospital Stays	HMIS Case Notes	\$3,000 per night

### Chronic Homeless – Three-Year Acute/Emergency System - Service Costs

The cost data reported here is a conservative estimate of the actual costs for the 24 chronic homeless persons during this three-year period; as indicated previously, only those health-related services recorded by case managers/outreach staff in the HMIS case notes are included in this report.

Additionally, there are other costs associated with systems or services responding to or interacting with this population that are not captured in this analysis, i.e., police department resources, i.e., officer time used in responding to incidents, encampments, calls for assistance; public library staff time associated with assisting persons within the library, public health staff and resources, fire and rescue and parks and recreation staff and resources devoted to attending to and responding to a crisis in encampments or other locations.

Within those data limitations available for this analysis, the combined three-year costs of available data associated with the use of acute and emergency services and assistance by 24 chronic individuals in Lincoln is \$2,553,587 over three years from January 2020 through December 2022. The average cost per individual was \$106,399. The three-year cost per individual ranged from \$255,466 to

\$41,363, Table 4. The average per person per year (PPPY) cost is \$35,466 in acute service costs based solely upon HMIS case notes of healthcare/ER/ambulance use and limited police department costs.

Table 4

Three-year Acute / Emergency System		
	Co	sts
Mean per pe	rson	\$106,399
Median		\$97,635
Minimum		\$41,363
Maximum		\$255,467
Sum		\$2,553,587
Percentiles	25	\$72,256
50		\$97,635
75		\$131,368

The breakout of cost by each system/service is presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Cost by Acute System / Service

System/Service	Cost
Emergency Shelter *	\$28,842
Outreach	\$84,063
Jail	\$1,204,740
Police Department **	\$144,000
County General Assistance	\$1,534
Crisis Assistance/Crisis Centers	\$626,708
Ambulance ***	\$74,200
Emergency Room ***	\$114,000
Hospital ***	\$275,500

<sup>\* 12</sup> of the 24 individuals entered the shelter during this 3-year period.

Considering their chronic homeless status, the emergency shelter costs associated with this population may seem low. However, most individuals in this population are either not able to enter the shelter due to a previous ban or suspension or choose not to do so versus living unsheltered. Only 12 of the 24 entered the shelter for any period during the three-year period. The average number of shelter nights for those that did enter the shelter was 53, just 4.8% of all nights during the period.

In contrast, each of the 24 individuals was incarcerated for some time during the three years ranging from 16 days to 578 days, with an average of 340 days, 31% of all nights. Incarceration is a known survival/coping strategy some unsheltered persons use, particularly under severe weather conditions. Some individuals will intentionally commit a violation/infraction that will result in an arrest or turn themselves in on existing warrants to utilize the 'comfort' of a jail cell, with hot meals, conditioned air, and a shower over the conditions on the street. Some chronically homeless individuals also use crisis assistance services in the community, such as detox and mental health facilities, for

<sup>\*\*</sup> LPD Classification costs only – does not include responding to calls, arrests

<sup>\*\*</sup> Limited data available from case notes in HMIS

similar purposes. As noted earlier, prior research (Indiana, 2013) indicates that reductions of 83% in incarcerations can be achieved through permanent supportive housing programs.

Ambulance transport, emergency room visits, and hospital stays were available from the HMIS case notes for 9 of the 24 persons, and a single ambulance transport and emergency room visit for 5 of those individuals were recorded in the case notes. This is undoubtedly an undercount of both occurrence and frequency of ambulance transport, emergency room visits, and hospital stays for this population. Research (Culhane et al., 2002) indicates that chronic homeless hospital costs may compose as much as 57% of all acute care costs for this population. In contrast, the available data for Lincoln hospital costs account for just 16% of all costs. Annual hospital costs in a 2013 study for 131 chronically homeless individuals in Los Angeles averaged \$63,808 (Getting Home, Flaming, et al., 2016), whereas in this study, the available data for hospital, ER visits, and ambulance transport combined averages \$6,440 per individual, just 10% of that found by Flaming in Los Angeles. The acute care costs reported here are a significant undercount that must be considered when reviewing the total costs to the community and potentially averted costs, particularly for costs in the health system.

# Reduction in Acute Service System Costs with Permanent Supportive Housing for Chronic

Research on the cost reductions associated with a housing-first approach and providing permanent supportive housing to persons experiencing chronic homelessness, as documented earlier in this report, is conclusive, consistent, and significant. Housing acute service system users in permanent supportive housing programs using a housing first approach reduces the cost to the acute and emergency care service system.

Examination of cost savings to the Lincoln and Lancaster County acute services system through the housing of 24 chronically homeless, high utilizers examined in this report, under three cost reduction levels derived from the research literature, are presented in Table 6.

Under a 40% cost reduction model, a conservative model based upon the research, a minimum annual reduction in acute service costs associated with this population is \$340,478, over a \$1 million reduction in acute and emergency service costs over three years. A per person per year (PPPY) averted cost of \$14,187 in acute/emergency services.

In a <u>50% cost reduction model</u> pre- to post-housing, there is a minimum \$425,598 annual reduction, \$1.2 million over three years, and a minimum PPPY of \$17,733.

<u>In a 60% cost reduction model</u> of acute and emergency service cost reductions, a minimum annual reduction of \$510,717, \$1.5 million over three years, and a PPPY reduction of \$21,280.

Table 6
Acute System Costs and Estimated Minimum Cost Reductions after Permanent Supportive Housing Entry

System/Service	3 Year Cost	40% averted	50% averted	60% averted
Emergency Shelter *	\$28,842	\$11,537	\$14,421	\$17,305
Outreach	\$84,063	\$33,625	\$42,032	\$50,438
Jail/Corrections	\$1,204,740	\$481,896	\$602,370	\$722,844
Lincoln Police Department	\$144,000	\$57,600	\$72,000	\$86,400
General Assistance	\$1,534	\$614	\$767	\$920
Crisis Centers/Services	\$626,708	\$250,683	\$313,354	\$376,025
Ambulance**	\$74,200	\$29,680	\$37,100	\$44,520
Emergency Room**	\$114,000	\$45,600	\$57,000	\$68,400
Hospital**	\$275,500	\$110,200	\$137,750	\$165,300
3 Year Totals	\$2,553,587	\$1,021,435	\$1,276,794	\$1,532,152
Annual Cost Reduction		\$340,478	\$425,598	\$510,717
Annual Acute Services Reduction per Person (n = 24)		\$14,187	\$17,733	\$21,280

<sup>\* 12</sup> of the 24 individuals entered the shelter during this 3-year period.

The annual cost per person estimates for the operations of a permanent supportive housing program range from \$15,651 to \$25,567 (Bausch, 2021; Jacobs, 2023). Using an estimated \$18k permanent supportive housing per person per year (PPPY) for Lincoln and available acute system costs, the net difference in acute costs after PSH housing costs are presented in Table 7 under three cost reduction models.

Table 7
Net Cost Averted to Lincoln Community Post PSH for24 Chronically Homeless – using available health system data

Coat Daduation Madel	40%	50%	60%
Cost Reduction Model	averted	averted	averted
Annual Acute Services			
Reduction per Person	\$14,187	<i>\$17,733</i>	\$21,280
PPPY Annual Cost			
Reduction w/Housing			
(\$18k per PSH unit)	-\$3,813	-\$267	\$3,280

<sup>\*\*</sup> Limited data available from case notes in HMIS

Given the known underreporting of healthcare system costs in this report and a substantial research literature that finds healthcare costs make up over 50% of **all** acute/emergency system costs (Culhane 2002; Flaming 2016, Wu, 2016) in serving the chronically homeless population, if the limited Lincoln data used in this study were adjusted so that healthcare costs account for 50% of **all** acute care costs for persons experiencing chronic homelessness, the 3-year acute system costs would increase from \$2.55 million to \$3.6 million, \$1.2 million per year, \$49,980 PPPY. Table 8 below presents the net PPPY cost reductions under the three models with this adjustment in healthcare costs. These PPPY costs are consistent with findings in the research literature.

Table 8

Net Cost Averted to Lincoln Community Post PSH for 24 Chronically Homeless – health care cost as 50% of all acute care system costs

Cost Averted Model	40%	50%	60%
Annual Acute Services Averted per Person w/ 50% adjustment in HC			
costs	\$19,992	\$24,990	\$29,988
PPPY Annual Cost			
Averted w/Housing (@\$18k per PSH unit)	\$1,992	\$6,990	11,988

# Summary

The City of Lincoln systems of care achieve incredible results in the most challenging work and are integral to making Lincoln a wonderful community. However, this review of the literature and City of Lincoln specific data demonstrate in addressing homelessness and specifically chronic homelessness, as a community, Lincoln is disproportionally and unnecessarily applying efforts and resources to the symptoms resulting from individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

With a proper accounting of all acute and emergency services costs, \$1.2 million<sup>5</sup> is spent annually for 24 chronically homeless persons in the City of Lincoln, \$49,980 PPPY.

With effective permanent supportive housing programs ranging in cost from \$15,651 to \$25,567 (PPPY) and using an estimated cost of \$18,000 for Lincoln, a PSH program for the same individuals could avert from \$1,992 PPPY to \$11,988 PPPY from the acute service system. These averted costs or saved expenditures are year over year. These savings 'buy' an overall improvement of the Lincoln community, decrease capacity strain on existing emergency systems, and improve the quality of life of persons experiencing chronic homelessness.

Lincoln is responding to chronic homeless-related healthcare primarily through the emergency room system and only when health issues are at a crisis level and orders of magnitude more costly.

Lincoln is responding to calls related to those experiencing chronic homelessness primarily through law enforcement as a component of street outreach vs. as support for homeless street outreach.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> With estimates of actual health care costs equaling 50% of all acute/emergency services.

Lincoln and chronically homeless persons use the county corrections system and substance use treatment and detox services as de facto shelters and housing programs.

All of these efforts are costly and treat the symptoms of chronic homelessness without ending the homeless episode. A reallocation of these efforts and resources toward solving the housing crisis of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness through permanent supportive housing with a housing-first approach will result in decreased numbers of persons experiencing homelessness, improve the quality of life for those persons, resulting in fewer returns to homelessness, and a significant reduction in resource allocation to and burden on community acute and emergency service systems.

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7.pdf

### Appendix A

# City of Lincoln Continuum of Care Housing First Standards

- Access to projects is not contingent on sobriety, minimum income requirements, lack of a criminal record (including status on the sex offender registry), completion of treatment, participation in services, status, or other unnecessary conditions.
- Projects do everything possible not to reject a household based on poor credit or financial history, poor or lack of rental history, minor criminal convictions, or behaviors that are interpreted as indicating a lack of "housing readiness."
- People with disabilities are offered clear opportunities to request reasonable accommodations within application and screening processes and during tenancy, and building and apartment units include special physical features that accommodate disabilities.
- Housing and service goals and plans are highly tenant-driven.
- Participation in services is voluntary and not a condition of tenancy but can and should be used to persistently engage participants to ensure housing stability.
- Services are informed by a harm-reduction philosophy recognizing that drug and alcohol use and addiction are a part of some tenants' lives. Tenants are engaged in non-judgmental communication regarding drug and alcohol use and are offered education regarding how to avoid risky behaviors and engage in safer practices.
- Substance use in and of itself, without other lease violations, is not considered a reason for eviction.
- Tenants in supportive housing are given reasonable flexibility in paying their share of rent on time and offered special payment arrangements for rent arrears and assistance with financial management, including representative payee arrangements.
- Every effort is made to provide a tenant the opportunity to transfer from one housing situation or project to another if a tenancy is in jeopardy. Whenever possible, eviction back into homelessness is avoided.
- Projects that cannot serve a household work through the coordinated entry process to ensure that the household has access to other housing and services such as prevention assistance, homeless dedicated housing and services, and community-based affordable housing

# Appendix B

# **Example HMIS Client Case Notes**

Client N	otes				System
				Date Range: 01/01/	/2020 thru 06/08/2023
Name:			Date of Birth:		
SSN Number:			Quality of DOB:	Full DOB Reported	
Quality of SSN:	Full SSN R	Reported	Unique Identifier:		
Title: Intoxicated in	ı vestibule				
Agency: People's 0	City Mission,	Lincoln	Staff:		Date: 06/01/2023
	inder the influ	ence. uti	arrived at the lized a Alco-Sensor to proximately 0032 hour		
Agency: People's C	City Mission,	Lincoln	Staff:	,	Date: 06/01/2023
		erson when he car		<u>.                                      </u>	
Title: Urinated in re	ecycling bin i	n detox room			
Agency: People's C	City Mission,	Lincoln	Staff:		Date: 06/01/2023
It was reported that 6/1.	urinate	d in the recycling	bin in detox room #50	, during his stay in the detor	c program from 5/31 to
Title: Suspended fo	or behavior d	luring 22-23 ES			
Agency: People's C	City Mission,	Lincoln	Staff:		Date: 04/18/2023
TH- has been that, he must meet v	suspended for with the direct	or his behavior du or and set up a be	ring the ES season ar havior contract.	nd his return date is 5-3-202	3. To return following
Title: LPD called at	oout a Detox				
Agency: People's C	City Mission,	Lincoln	Staff:	,	Date: 04/15/2023
	oing to call en	nergency for him.		.277, But I really dont know he Banned from Detox and	
Title: detox program	m				
Agency: People's C	City Mission,	Lincoln	Staff:		Date: 03/22/2023
Client's Project Stay	: People's Cit	y Mission Detoxific	cation Program, Linco	In [10/02/2022 - 10/03/2022	]
vas brought i	n at 2145 by	officer Fullerton ar	nd BAC is .179. He ha	s smokes and a lighter in of	fice.
Title: BAC .343 /Inc	ontinent			. <u></u>	
Agency: People's C	City Mission,	Lincoln	Staff:	1	Date: 03/20/2023
away because the te his bedding.	in last night v emperature w	vanting to stay. He as less than 33 de	e blew a .343, well ove grees. He came in, la	er twice what we allow, but I id down, slept quietly, and u	was unable to turn him irinated on himself and
Title: BAC .242/ Ald	cohol on Pro	perty/ In Bunkho	use		
Agency: People's C	City Mission,	Lincoln	Staff:	l e e	Date: 03/13/2023
ES.	in at .242 BA	.C, had an Earthqu	uake in his poke, and	went into the bunkhouse. A	dd 37 days suspension w/

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# System

Date Range: 01/01/2020 thru 06/08/2023

Title: BAC .281 - sent to sober up Staff: I Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Date: 03/06/2023 came in and was intoxicated - difficulty walking, disoriented. I breathalyzed him, his BAC was .281. I asked him to return when he was closer to .150 BAC. Title: Detox Program: BAC .239 Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 02/26/2023 023: was brought to detox at 9:55 p.m. on 2/26/2023 by LPD Officer Fenci #1587 with a BAC of .239. Mr. exited detox at 3:30 a.m. on 2/27/2023. Title: Police summoned for trespassing Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 02/19/2023 stepped out for a cigarette after 10:00 pm and came back into the airlock. He asked to be let in. I reminded him that, as he knows, if he leaves after curfew, he needs to be off property until 5:00 am. He refused to leave, I called the police, they spoke to him, and he left. Title: Alcohol Property Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 02/17/2023 had a Hurricane on him in the dining room, 30 days out>LC Title: Feb. Attendance 2023 Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 02/02/2023 NCNS-1,2,3,24 Title: January Attendance 2023 Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: I Date: 01/29/2023 NCNS-28 Title: smoking in the bathroom and assaulting staff Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 01/26/2023 was caught smoking in the bathroom . 🔳 showed signs of being intoxicated JW attempted to get 🎜 to blow a BAC JL slapped JWs hand away. JW called LPD Title: Detox Program: BAC .146 Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 01/21/2023 h was brought to detox at 10:30 p.m. by LPD Officer 
exited detox on Sunday, January 22nd. on Saturday, January 21st with a BAC of .146. N Title: HOSPITAL Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 01/18/2023 HAD ANOTHER SEIZURE AND WENT TO THE HOSPITAL Title: HOSP Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 12/09/2022 had a seizure this morning in the agape and fell and hit his head on the lockers on the southwest side of the agape. I am called 911 and another guest took care of J Title: Hospital

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System

# **Client Notes**

Date Range: 01/01/2020 thru 06/08/2023

	Date Hange	. 0 110 112020 4114 0	0/00/2020
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	10/14/2022
JK- I was in the dining room getting ready to open the doo an urgent manner when I go there, they said there was a g was in the middle of a seizure and I JK called 911 also there to help until help arrived.	muy having a seizure in the agape.	When I JK got there	
Title: Detox			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	10/03/2022
10/3/2022-When checking on at 9:15a he indicincted including a belt, hat, shoes, cigarettes, sweatshirt and 5\$.			
Title: Detox			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	10/02/2022
At 4:55pm LPD brought in and he was admitted integrated belt, sweatshirt, shoes, hat, cigarettes and 5dollars in cash		rrival his possessions	contained a
At approximately 2:30am on a routine room check of the c informed him that i needed to administer a BCM on him. H	lient I entered the room in which he e blew a .013 then laid back down	e was somewhat awak	e. I
At the 4:00am check he indicated he had to use the restro room. KW	om so I escorted him and brought	him a sack lunch back	to his
Title: March attendance 2022			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	03/03/2022
NCNS 3,4			
Title: Sent Guest to Hospital			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	02/22/2022
At around 3:30 am a Guest came to the office to inform St. Staff TP went to see what was going on to discover unresponsive. Staff immediately called 911 the Paramedic	sweating and face was Red he ap	peared very confused	and
Title: Detox			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	02/19/2022
JK- \ showed up the front door clearly intoxicate needed to go to detox and said he has not been dring blow 0's. said no and tried to come in anyways. I JK sto him to head back out to detox and possibly come back at 8 for him to go to detox around 2:40pm	iking anything, I JK asked iii I di	d a BAC on you right n hair in the lobby and tr	ow will you ied to get
Title: February attendance 2022			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	02/02/2022
NCNS 2,3,4,9,10,11,23,26			
Title: More Intoxicated			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	02/01/2022
was not allowed to stay on 1/31/2022 for having a B before midnight, was breathalyzed, and had a BAC of .267		oack sober. He returne	d shortly
I contacted the non-emergency number and explained the were unable to do so - our permitting him to return means		d to arrest and lodge Ja	ason, but
Title: Intoxicated			

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Date Range: 01/01/2020 thru 06/08/2023

Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date: 02/01/2022
TH- came in today intoxicated. His BAC is .226.	We asked him to leave and come back wi	hen he was sober.
Title: More Intoxicated/Alcohol on Property/Fighting	g Police *** NO ES	
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date: 02/01/2022
was here earlier today and blew .226. He was a at 19:17 and he blew a .297. He is not allowed to stay removed.		
When they arrived, arefused to leave and struggle alcohol beer hidden in his coat.	ed with them. During his struggle, he popp	ed a double sized high
Because of the constant more than one time a day call the alcohol on his person, and figthing with the police,		
Title: Intoxicated		
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date: 01/31/2022
came in today intoxicated and his BAC was .230	D. We asked him to leave and come back v	when he is sober.
Title: Alcohol on property		
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff: X	Date: 01/28/2022
RW went into the Agape restroom and caught	drinking a hurricane. He is getting another	30 days suspension.
Title: seizure		
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date: 01/27/2022
JK- At around 4:25 as I JK was coming back from doin the bathroom, another guest came up and said that the back to the agape bathroom and saw that it was in fact	ere was an old man laying on the floor hav	ing a seizure. on call went
Title: Intoxicated		
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date: 01/24/2022
TH- Found unconscious in the Agape bathroom. treatment and evaluation	. I called LPD to come and assess the situ	ation and take him for
is to be on a contract governing his behavior	r. He will be given ES, only if hw tests .1 o	r lower BAC
Title: ALCOHOL ON PROPERTY		
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date: 01/21/2022
was drinking a Beer in the bathroom, tonight offe days suspension for this.	ering it to a few guest and handed it to me.	. Was very drunk also. #0
Title: 30 day suspension - assault		
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date: 01/17/2022
I witnessed grant grant land by the shoulded days to his suspension. He is now suspended through	ers from behind and give him a "bum's rush 3/14.	n" towards the exit. Adding 30
Title: Alcohol on Property	1000	
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff.	Date: 01/14/2022
had a bottle of Vodka open drinking it wi with ES for thirty days.	ith help from / The Land Land Land Land	ey all three are suspended
Title: Erratic and belligerent behavior / Trespassing	9	
		4/7



Date Range: 01/01/2020 thru 06/08/2023

Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 01/04/2022 was notably intoxicated last night. He made a number of contradictory statements, lied to staff, and did not clean himself up after having been told he needed to do so because of soiling himself. He left three times after curfew. The first two times he was let in with a warning each time that if he left again, he would need to leave until 5:00 am. The third time, we declined to allow him back in and called law enforcement, asking that he be taken to detox. He began shaking the doors forcefully while we waited for the police. The thought behind calling them was that if he left again, he wasn't capable of helping himself and would likely suffer injury or death. When the police arrived, he yelled at them for quite a while before leaving with them. The police advised us that Jason is "flagged" at detox - no longer allowed there at all because of his medical conditions". He was instead booked for trespassing for refusing to leave and likely released on PR Bond. \* If his medical consitions are severe enough to prevent him from going to detox, aren't they too severe for him to be here? Title: Sent Guest to Hospital Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 12/28/2021 At around 11:45 pm last night ■ had a Seizure in the Agape while sleeping on the Floor. Staaf TP called 911 Paramedics arrived shortly afterwards to Transport him to the ER. Title: highly intoxicated. Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 12/15/2021 ■was in the agape and we were told by day shift that 🔳 was not supposed to be here tonight and 🗏 was highly intoxicated so he was asked to leave, add not want to leave but instead wanted to go to detox, so I JK called to have him sent. this was done around 8:30pm Title: December 2021 Attendance Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: J Date: 12/09/2021 NCNS 8,9,10,21,22 HOSP-16 Title: Non-compliance with Covid requirements. Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 12/07/2021 TH- DD, TH, and JL confronted on his resistance to producing a negative Covid test or a Vax card. He is also having seizures on a regular basis and chooses alcohol over going to the pharmacy to get his meds to stabilize his symptoms. We stated he isn't eligible for services until he gets Covid compliant and starts his medication. Title: Sent Guest to Hospital Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 12/06/2021 It was brought to our attention that was sitting in the entryway and had vomitted on himself. He was confused and couldn't understand simple questions. We called 911, he was transported to the hospital and later reurned with a negative Covid test. Title: Sent Guest to Hospital Date: 12/06/2021 Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: I was seizing. I called 911, gave them the information requested, At approximately 10:20, we were alerted that assisted him as directed, and waited with him until EMS arrived and transported him. Title: Alcohol on property Staff: Date: 10/09/2021 Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln was sitting on the steps of the bike rack with 3 unopened, 1 opened, and 1 empty beer drinking. Title: Hospital Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 06/04/2021 came in around 12am and looked terrible and smelt terrible and staff members were worried for him so I JK

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System

Date Range: 01/01/2020 thru 06/08/2023

- yata	Table 10 to		
called so that he could be taken to the hospital and looked at.			
Title: Transported by EMS			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff: I	Date:	06/01/2021
Approx. 11:35 6/1/21, approx. came to the shelter. Supervisione was at severe risk and called and asked to have him transport		so into	xicated that
Title: May Attendance 2021			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	05/26/2021
NCNS 26,29			
Title: called for help			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	05/23/2021
JK			
Title: Sent To Hospital			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	04/07/2021
At around 9:30pm Staff TP noticed that <b>processed was</b> bent owniting up Blood and Mucus into the garbage can. Staff immeditansport him to the ER.	ver the garage can in hallway outside of th ately called 911 Paramedics arrived Short	ie office ly after	e. He was wards to
Title: April 2021 Attendance			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	04/02/2021
NCNS-1,10,14,15-EXIT			
Title: March attendance 2021			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	03/03/2021
NCNS- 2,26,31			
Title: 911			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	02/25/2021
JK- At around 1:45 we had another guest come up and say that with the closer one and staff JK called for the ambulance. was in around that was starting to turn colors so they pulled nelp arrived.	nd out of seizing until the paramedics came	e in to v	work with
Title: Alcohol on Property			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff: 2 Ray	Date:	02/11/2021
RW went into the restroom in the Agape at 3 PM and was second stall. He and was in there and had been	standing there with a beer in his hand. Two seen drinking alcohol earlier as well.	vo more	e was in the
Title: look into medical attention			
Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln	Staff:	Date:	01/15/2021
nicely for him to go clean his feet and he was totally willing. I also that he has some sores on his feet that I think should be looked a ooked like they had some green in them, I am hoping he does no	with a towel and body wash and woke went and took are a new clean pair of s t my a medical professional. To my person	up a socks a nal eyes	and asked and noticed s the sores
about the	condition of this leet. The acknowledged th	iat tiley	y nave been

System

Date Range: 01/01/2020 thru 06/08/2023

fairly painful as well. Paramedics came after 7am and took him to the hospital. Title: Medical emergency Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 01/12/2021 was sleepwalking around 4:30 AM and was nonresponsive to attempts to speak with him. Upon getting closer it was discovered that he was bleeding from his head and mouth. He was also urinating on the floor. Paramedics were called and they took him to the hospital. Title: Neg COVID test results Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Date: 01/09/2021 Staff: came back today from having been in the hospital with a negative test result. He is eligible for service. Title: January Attendance 2021 Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Staff: Date: 01/06/2021 NCNS 6 HOSP-21 Title: Alcohol on Property Agency: People's City Mission, Lincoln Date: 01/01/2021

came in with 4 fireballs at about 11 AM. | RW told him he had to leave that he could come in at 8 either here or the alternate site. He is suspended with ES.