

Participants to Peers

Practices in Supporting Staff with Lived Experience

Hannah Landgraf & Claressa Peterson
Anawim Housing—Des Moines, Iowa



What We Do

Anawim Housing serves approximately **250 households** who have a history of homelessness and are living with a physical disability, a mental illness, a substance use disorder, or are fleeing domestic violence.

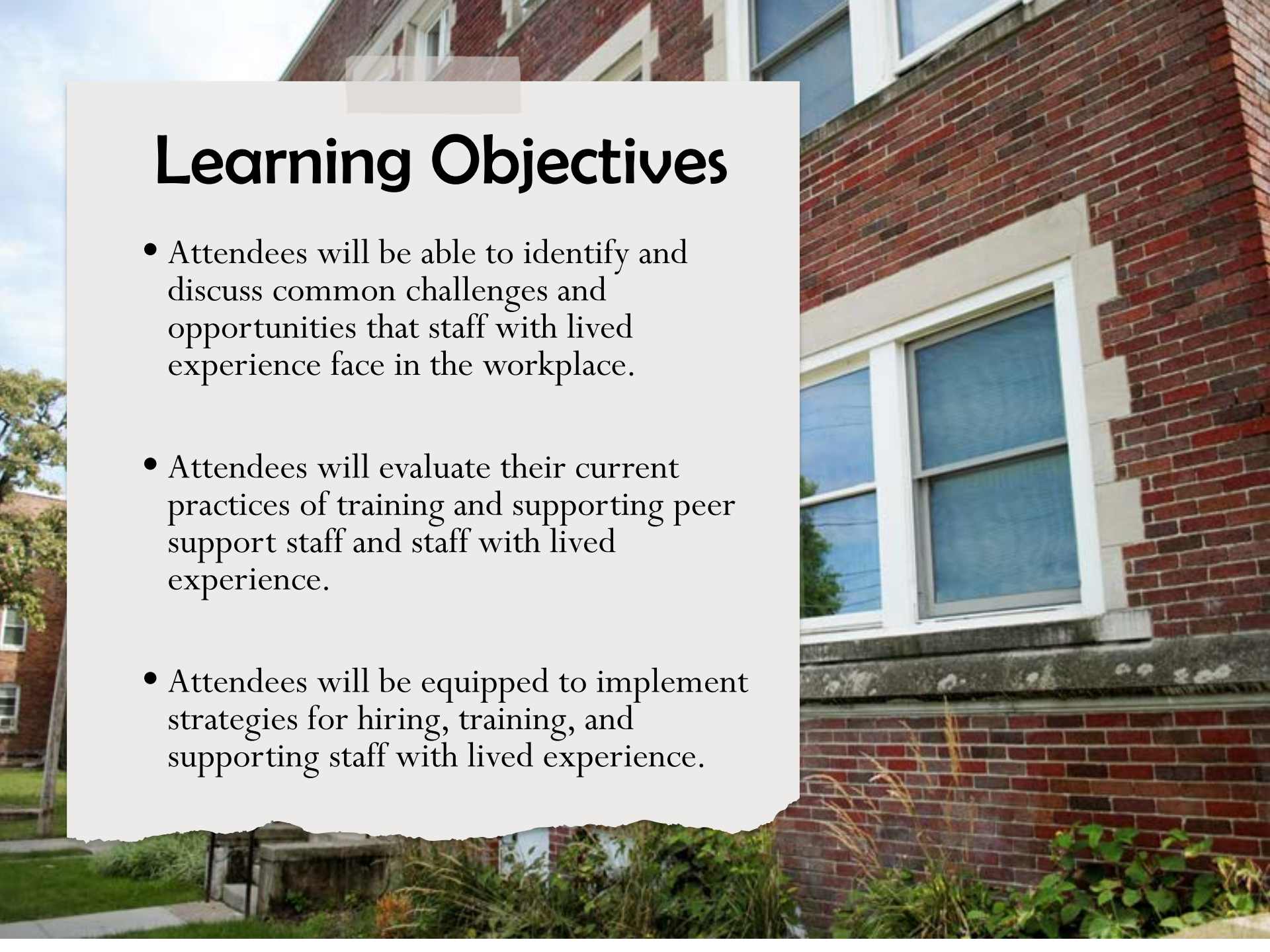
These households are served under a **scattered-site Permanent Supportive Housing** programming with fidelity to **Housing First** and utilizing principles of **Harm Reduction**.

- ☐ 80% of households are living with a severe mental illness
- ☐ 58% of households have a history of a substance use disorder
- ☐ 40% of households have been victims of domestic violence
- ☐ 93% of the households we serve are retained in housing or exit to a positive location



Learning Objectives

- Attendees will be able to identify and discuss common challenges and opportunities that staff with lived experience face in the workplace.
- Attendees will evaluate their current practices of training and supporting peer support staff and staff with lived experience.
- Attendees will be equipped to implement strategies for hiring, training, and supporting staff with lived experience.



Getting to Know Each Other

Raise your hand if you have ever experienced burnout when working on issues of housing or homelessness

Raise your hand if you have ever been triggered or activated when working with the people you serve

Raise your hand if you have ever experienced vicarious or secondhand trauma when working with the people you serve

Peers Vs. Frontline Workers with Lived Experience

“Peer workers are hired with the knowledge of their lived experience of homelessness. On the other hand, Frontline Workers with Lived Experience (FWLEs) are often employed by employers who are not aware of their previous or current lived experience of homelessness. They are usually hired on the merit of education, work experience, as entry-level employees (Jones, 2022).

“Peers are often paid less and seen as an add-on to services, rather than service providers in their own right (Lived Experience Advisory Council, 2016).

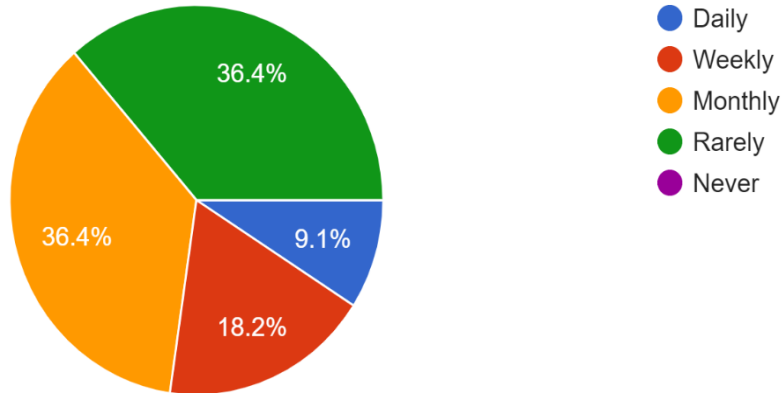


By The Numbers

- 18% of respondents reported a history of homelessness
- 36% of respondents reported a history of domestic or intimate partner violence
- 55% of respondents reported a history of mental illness
- 64% of respondents reported a history of substance use disorder
- 82% of respondent have witnessed a traumatic event

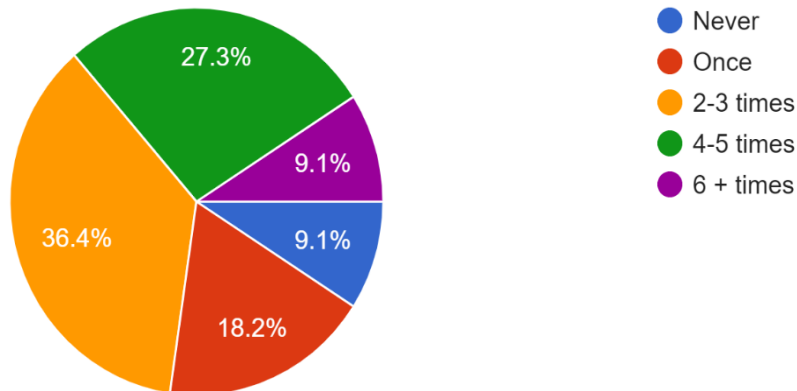
How often do you experience vicarious trauma in the workplace? Vicarious trauma, also called secondhand trauma, is defined as, "the emotional r...ssional (American Counseling Association, 2016)."

11 responses



How many times have you experienced burn out when working in the social services sector? Job burnout, as defined by the World Health Organizatio...mpact on a person's physical and mental health.

11 responses



A Survey of Anawim Housing Staff

Claressa's Story

- Life before Permanent Supportive Housing
- Entering Permanent Supportive Housing
- Turning Point & Recovery

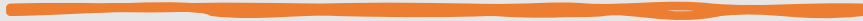




Claressa's Story

- The Permanent Supportive Housing Model
- Life Today
- Challenges as a Peer Support Advocate

Challenges & Opportunities for Staff with Lived Experience



Challenges

- Boundary Maintenance
- Transfer & Countertransference
- Risk of Imposing Personal Experiences
- Secondhand Trauma



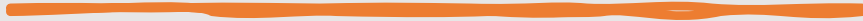
Opportunities

- Relatability & Connection
- Role Modeling Resilience
- Cultural Competence
- Enhanced Empathy & Compassion
- Advocacy & System Change



What are we missing on these lists?

Best Practices in Hiring & Interviewing



Inclusive Job Descriptions	Diverse Hiring Panels	Trauma-Informed Interviewing	Behavioral & Situational Questions	Assess for Teamwork, Openness, Non-Judgement, and Collaboration
Craft job descriptions that explicitly welcome candidates with lived experience	Ensure diversity among interviewers to avoid unintentional biases	Create a safe and supportive interview environment	Use behavioral and situational questions to assess how candidates have navigated challenges in the past	Evaluate candidates' ability to work collaboratively and contribute to a team environment
Clearly outline the skills and experiences required for the role and acknowledge the value of personal insights and resilience	Include individuals with lived experience on the interview panel to provide a unique perspective	Avoid triggering questions and prioritize open-ended inquiries	This approach helps identify transferable skills and the ability to apply personal experiences in a professional context	We can train for skills, but it is difficult to train for attitudes, a willingness to learn & grow, flexibility, and openness

Culture Fit

'Fitting in'

Gut feeling

Often undefined

Hard to express

Values Fit

Specific principles

Concrete examples

Explicitly stated

Can offer feedback

Best Practices in Training Peers & Frontline Staff with Lived Experience

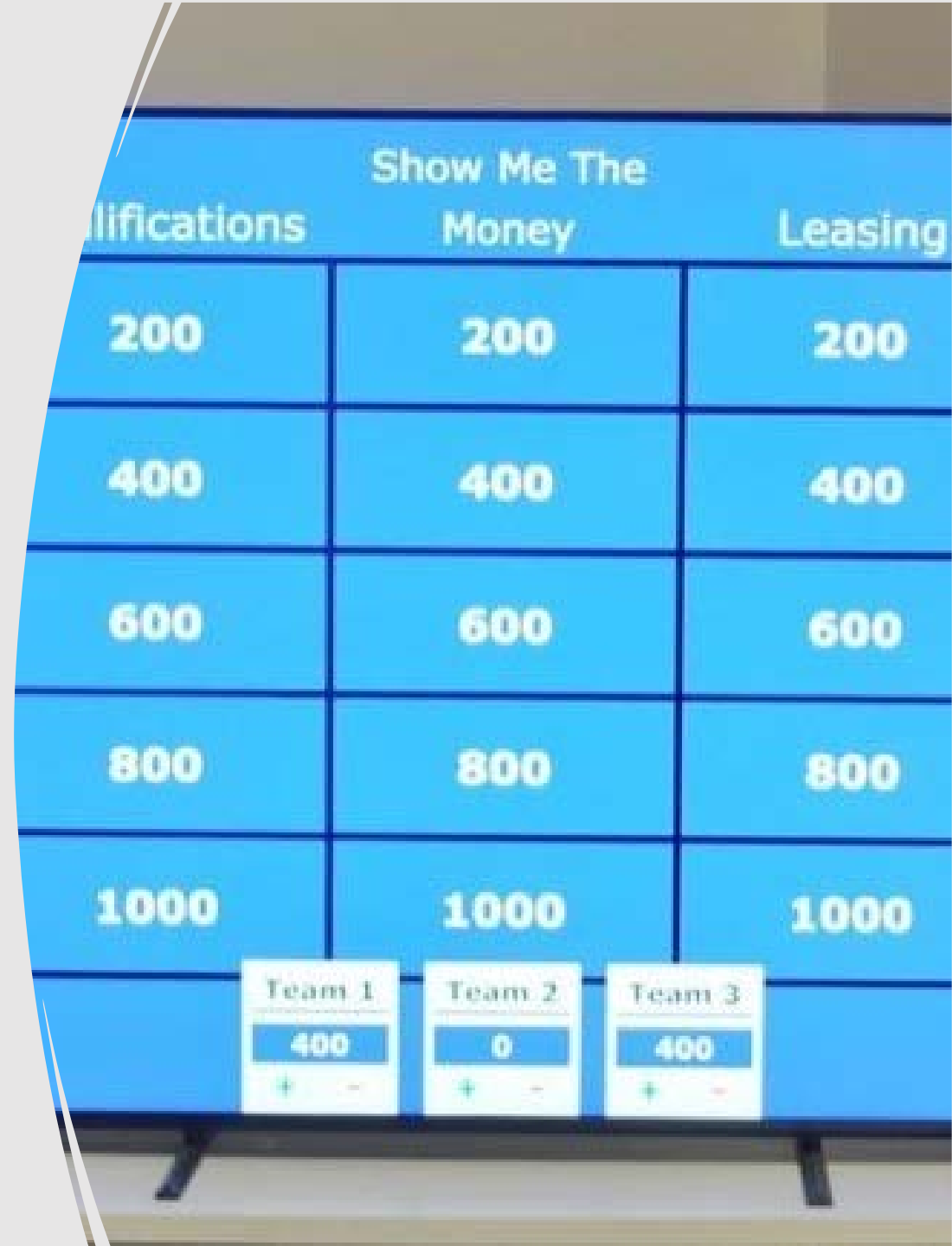


Training is not a singular task – it is an ongoing, evolving process for all staff

☐ Learning Styles

☐ Meeting Styles

☐ Side-By-Side Training



ANAWIM HOUSING TRAINING MANUAL



PROCESS

LEASE SIGNING & MOVE IN

Pre-Lease Signing

- ☐ Calculate Rent and Create Rent Explanation Letter.
- ☐ Ensure we have keys to the unit and make copies as needed (there should always be at least one key on the keyboard). Use your RAMP card to make copies if needed.
- ☐ Begin Move-In Flow and create sublease in Appfolio.
- ☐ Print Move-In Check List and Chart Order.
- ☐ Gather Welcome Bucket and other home goods from the storage room.

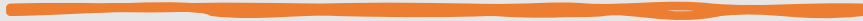
Lease Signing & Move In

- ☐ Have participant sign their sublease and move-in documents. Give them a key, their Welcome Bucket, and any other items household items from the closet.
- ☐ If not otherwise obtained in an ROI, record an emergency contact for the participant.
- ☐ Make copies of all signed documents for the participant.
- ☐ Walk new unit with participant and fill out the Move-In Check List.

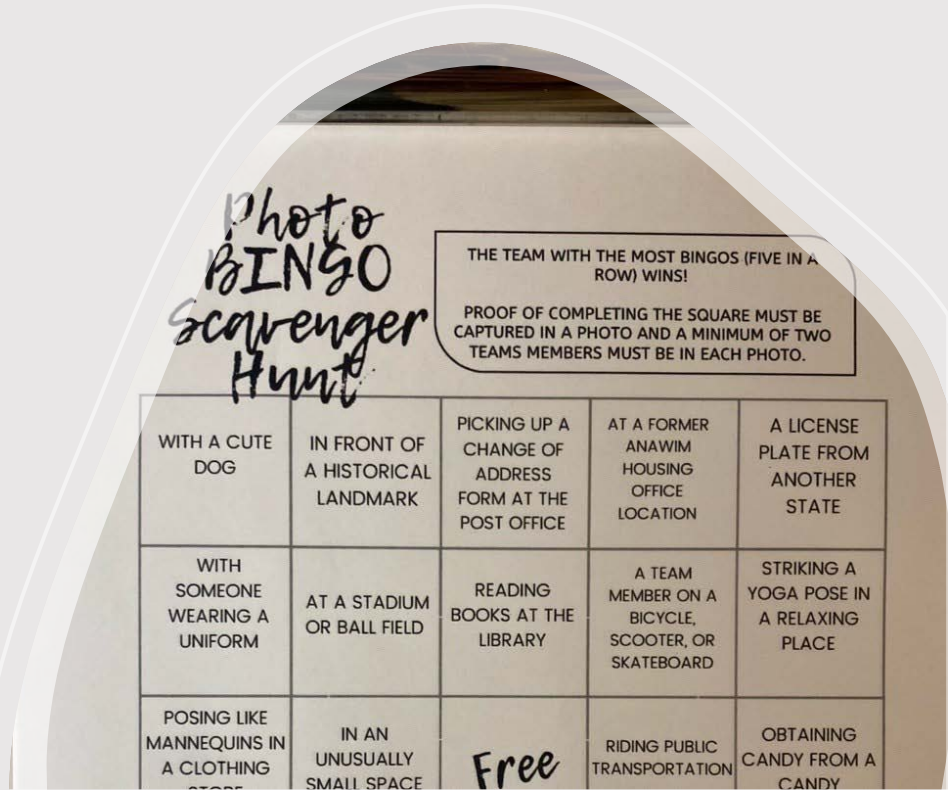
Post Move-In (this should be done within 24 hours of the move-in)

- ☐ Update ServicePoint with Move-In date by adding an 'Interim Review > Update'. You will find the move-in date on the Iowa Basic Update section.
- ☐ Notify Operations Manager of move-in so the Program Participant List can be updated.
- ☐ Scan and send the Property Manager / Landlord copies of the sublease and move-in letter.
- ☐ Scan and upload the Master Lease, Sublease / Addenda, HQS Request & Reply, and Rent Reasonableness into AppFolio.
- ☐ Set up initial and ongoing home visits.

Best Practices in Supporting & Retaining Staff



- ❑ Ongoing training & support
- ❑ Explicit conversations about how staff want to grow, their goals for the future, and how leadership can help them get there
- ❑ Leadership training
- ❑ Ongoing conversations about burnout – and the ability to notice the red flags in one another
- ❑ Flexibility
- ❑ Creative team building





Fair Compensation

“How do we compensate people for that – for dealing with the most heart-wrenching situations in their everyday work but still showing up day after day with love for the people they serve?”

How do you put a dollar amount to the trauma that happens when there aren't enough resources to meet even the most basic needs of people you serve?” (Oliva, 2024)

Salary-Related Hardships

Human services professionals are often underpaid, often earning less than what their education and experience would suggest, and struggling to afford basics such as housing. Thus, the Alliance asked a series of questions designed to understand how homeless services salaries were impacting people's lives.

Basic Needs. A portion of respondents did not want to share their salary information. Of those responding (and working at least 35 hours per week), 55 percent were making under \$50,000 per year. One in three said that their salaries were not enough to meet their basic needs. And, at the opposite end of the spectrum, only 14 percent said that they earned enough to live well (having basic needs and many wants met).



Homeless Research Institute, 2023

Will our sector be able to make progress on our goals—of ending or alleviating homelessness—without a significant changes to how we support and compensate homelessness service providers?

Q & A

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Contact Us

Hannah Landgraf

515-422-7476

hlandgraf@anawimhousing.org

Claressa Peterson

515-710-4735

peersupport@anawimhousing.org

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