Annotated Bibliography

Opioids and Public Health

2017

This bibliography is a selective sampling of educational resources that introduce students to issues surrounding opioid use and the global pain epidemic. The multidisciplinary materials may be suitable for students at the high school, undergraduate college, and public health graduate school levels. Learning objectives and supporting materials will vary depending on how the material is used in a course. Brief annotations provide a cursory summary, and indicate where certain materials may be particularly relevant. Within each section, dated publications are listed in chronological order.

This bibliography accompanies a lesson focused on the global pain epidemic. The materials listed here represent a diversity of viewpoints and opinions and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints and opinions of the Incubator.

This annotated bibliography includes:

- Basic Reads
- Reports
- Articles and Briefs
- Data Publications, Portals, and Interactives
- Country Profiles and Fact Sheets
- Topic Portals and Organizations
- Multimedia and News
- Teaching Material
# Selected Resources – At a Glance

## BASIC READS


## REPORTS


## ARTICLES AND BRIEFS


Opioids and Public Health: Annotated Bibliography


**DATA PUBLICATIONS, PORTALS, AND INTERACTIVES**


**COUNTRY PROFILES AND FACT SHEETS**


**TOPIC PORTALS AND ORGANIZATIONS**


# Opioids and Public Health: Annotated Bibliography

## MULTIMEDIA AND NEWS


**Playlist.** Playlist (11 Videos): Rx Awareness. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2017. [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvrp9iOILTQYcHqukShtAIqk01FTDGV9m](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvrp9iOILTQYcHqukShtAIqk01FTDGV9m).


## TEACHING MATERIAL


Opioids and Public Health: Annotated Bibliography

Annotated Bibliography

BASIC READS

Alleviating the Access Abyss in Palliative Care and Pain Relief—an Imperative of Universal Health Coverage: The Lancet Commission Report

The Prescription Opioid and Heroin Crisis: A Public Health Approach to an Epidemic of Addiction

The Problem of Pain

The Family That Built an Empire of Pain

REPORTS

Global State of Pain Treatment: Access to Medicines and Palliative Care
This report from Human Rights Watch examines the barriers to availability of palliative care and pain treatment worldwide. In 1961, countries adopted the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, which stated narcotic drugs are “indispensable for the relief of pain and suffering.” However, access to these pain relieving drugs remains limited for the world’s most vulnerable. Surveying palliative care experts in 40 countries, the report weaves together expert insights on health policy, education of health care workers, and drug availability related to palliative care, and analyzes publicly available data on opioid consumption to treat chronic pain. The report finds a large unmet need for pain treatment, shaped by both health policy and pharmaceutical trade.

Community Management of Opioid Overdose
This report from the World Health Organization shares best practices for responding to an overdose. According to the report, an opioid overdose is frequently reversed with naloxone and basic life support. Although these resources are typically only available through medical institutions, community members who are likely to witness these overdoses should have access to appropriate response. Naloxone—while a life-saving response—should not be seen as a replacement for medical care.

Global Atlas of Palliative Care at End of Life
This report from the World Palliative Care Alliance and the World Health Organization provides basic information and statistics about palliative care, the global need for expanded and more effective palliative
care, barriers to pain treatment, existing models of palliative care across resource settings, and opportunities for further work.

“Pain Tears Me Apart”: Challenges and Progress in Ensuring the Right to Palliative Care in Morocco
This report from Human Rights Watch examines challenges people with life-limiting illnesses in Morocco face in accessing palliative care. The report indicates positive policies to expand palliative care in the country, specifically two national health policies: one that adapts medical curriculum within the country and the other that reduces regulatory barriers to accessing opioids. Despite such progress, only two public hospitals have palliative care units, and services are not available to those with non-oncological conditions. As the burden of chronic illness rises, more specific attention on palliative care and pain treatment is needed.

A Second Chance: Overdose Prevention, Naxolone, and Human Rights in the United States
This report from Human Rights Watch explores the role of naloxone in responding to opioid overdoses in the United States. The report highlights the steps needed to curb and prevent overdose deaths: ensuring people who use drugs have naloxone access; prescription rule reforms to expand naloxone access to community members; encouraging reports of overdoses by protecting overdose reporters from criminal prosecution; and equipping law enforcement officials with naloxone.

Alleviating the Access Abyss in Palliative Care and Pain Relief—an Imperative of Universal Health Coverage: The Lancet Commission Report
GHILI repository link: [http://repository.gheli.harvard.edu/repository/11818]
This Lancet Commission report calls on the global health community to alleviate the global burden of health-related human suffering by providing equitable, worldwide access to palliative care and pain relief. The practice of palliative care, defined as a core component of universal health care, has been ignored in most parts of the world, especially in the failure to provide pain-relieving medicines such as morphine and other opioids to sick and dying people. The report describes current global conditions, outlines challenges and opportunities, and presents a framework and methodology to achieve universal access goals. It emphasizes that overcoming the access abyss requires collective international action, and it sets forth recommendations and strategies for global implementation. These include integrating a cost-effective package of essential medicines and equipment into universal health coverage, adopting a metric for health-related suffering to describe the state of the world’s health, and amending inflexible regulatory policies that inhibit the medical distribution of opioids. The commission report is accompanied by two comments and a profile, as well as two audio interviews.

“Punishing the Patient”: Ensuring Access to Pain Treatment in Guatemala
This Human Rights Watch report reviews Guatemala’s drug control system and examines access to pain medication within the country. The report finds that due to limited and inconsistent access to opioid analgesics, many patients with pain suffering needlessly. In addition to issues with pharmacy supplies, all of the doctors with the ability to prescribe morphine work in Guatemala City—placing the immense burden of distance on individuals who live in rural areas.
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World Drug Report 2017
This annual report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) provides an overview of drug demand and supply; cultivation of plant-based drugs; analysis of global synthetic drug markets; and the nexus of drug use and organized crime. In particular, the report highlights that opioids, including heroin, remain the most harmful drug type—a majority of avoidable, premature deaths related to drugs are associated with opioids. In 2015, 70 percent of the global burden of disease attributable to drug use disorders were related to opioids.

ARTICLES AND BRIEFS

The Promotion and Marketing of Oxycontin: Commercial Triumph, Public Health Tragedy
This article highlights the public health risks of highly prescribed, controlled drugs, using the promotion and marketing of OxyContin as a case example. The author provides in-depth analysis of Purdue Pharma’s heavy marketing of OxyContin after its introduction in 1996; with increased availability, OxyContin became the most prevalent abused prescription opioid by 2004. The author shines a light on physician ethics as well as the need for enhanced oversight of the pharmaceutical industry at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Ending Needless Suffering in Francophone Africa
This brief from Human Rights Watch documents the challenges and opportunities for palliative care services in Francophone Africa. In particular, the brief highlights that 16 of 22 Francophone African countries lacked any health providers that offer palliative care for adults and children requiring pain relief for the management for chronic illnesses.

The Prescription Opioid and Heroin Crisis: A Public Health Approach to an Epidemic of Addiction
This article shares a public health approach to reduce opioid-related morbidity and mortality. In particular, the article describes the scope of the public health crisis, its historical context, and framework of interventions to address the growing epidemic of opioid addiction.

Addressing the Burden of Mental, Neurological, and Substance Use Disorders: Key Messages from Disease Control Priorities, 3rd Edition
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(15)00390-6.
GHELI repository link: http://repository.gheli.harvard.edu/repository/11075.
This article describes findings from the third edition of Disease Control Priorities (DCP-3) on the burden of mental, neurological, and substance use disorders, and the relative effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of interventions. The primary goal of Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries, first published by the World Bank in 1993, is to provide evidence that will assist decision makers in allocating limited resources in a way that maximizes health benefits to the population. In DCP-3, interventions were included for five groups of disorders (adult mental disorders, child mental and developmental disorders, neurological disorders, alcohol use disorder, and illicit drug use disorders) and for suicide and self-harm, a health outcome strongly associated with...
these disorders. One of several novel features of DCP-3, compared to previous editions, is the inclusion of how interventions can be packaged together across a range of delivery platforms and channels.

**The Economic Burden of Prescription Opioid Overdose, Abuse, and Dependence in the United States, 2013**
This article estimates the economic burden of prescription opioid overdose, misuse, and dependence to help decision makers assess the cost-effectiveness of their approaches addressing the opioid crisis in the U.S. The analysis, based on data from 2013, estimates the total economic burden to be $78.5 billion, with over one-third of the amount due to increased health care and substance abuse treatment costs.

**Substance Use in Young People**
GHILI repository link: [http://repository.gheli.harvard.edu/repository/11132](http://repository.gheli.harvard.edu/repository/11132)
This Lancet Series examines the increasing global problem of substance use among young people, looking at the clinical and epidemiological picture as well as exploring the knowledge regarding prevention, early intervention, harm reduction, and treatment. The use of tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs during adolescence carries potential short- and long-term impacts on physical, mental, and social well-being. Series papers include:
- [The Increasing Global Health Priority of Substance Use in Young People](http://www.thelancet.com/series/adolescent-substance-misuse)
- [Why Young People's Substance Use Matters For Global Health](http://www.thelancet.com/series/adolescent-substance-misuse)
- [Prevention, Early Intervention, Harm Reduction, And Treatment of Substance Use in Young People](http://www.thelancet.com/series/adolescent-substance-misuse)

**Palliative Care in Humanitarian Crises: Always Something to Offer**
This article calls for holistic palliative care as an essential part of responding to humanitarian crises. The authors describe four humanitarian contexts where palliative care would aid in alleviating suffering; in long-term humanitarian crises for patients with life-limiting illnesses; in mass casualty events where individuals are triaged based on likelihood of survival; in infectious disease outbreaks with high mortality and limited resources for response; and in camps for refugees and displaced people where palliative care is required during transition to the camp.

**National Palliative Care Capacities Around the World: Results From the World Health Organization Noncommunicable Disease Country Capacity Survey**
This article assesses country capacity globally to address palliative care for noncommunicable disease (NCD) patients. Analyzing results from the World Health Organization Noncommunicable Disease Country Capacity Survey, the article indicates that a minority of countries have national policies for NCDs that include palliative care. Furthermore, palliative care is usually poorly funded compared to other NCD management approaches, and there remains a large country-income gradient for palliative care funding and treatment availability at the primary care level.
Patient Residence Characteristics of Opioid-Related Inpatient Stays and Emergency Department Visits Nationally and by State, 2014
This brief from the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research indicates that although large metropolitan areas in the U.S. had the highest rate of opioid-related inpatient stays, the rate of opioid hospitalizations increased the most in small metropolitan areas during the 2005 to 2014 period. In 2014, communities with the lowest income had the highest rates of opioid-related inpatient stays.

DATA PUBLICATIONS, PORTALS, AND INTERACTIVES

CDC Data Portal: Drug Overdose Deaths and Opioid-Involved Deaths
GHELI repository link: http://repository.gheli.harvard.edu/repository/11811
This data portal hosted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention depicts how drug overdose deaths and opioid-involved deaths continue to increase in the United States; overdose deaths from opioids have more than quadrupled since 1999. Opioids are a drug class that contains heroin as well as prescription pain relievers such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, codeine, fentanyl, and others; these substances interact with specific brain receptors to reduce the intensity of pain. Deaths from drug overdoses are up within nearly all population groups – men and women, all races, and nearly all adult age cohorts—and opioids are involved in more than three out of every five overdose deaths. This portal offers data about drug overdose rates for different types of opioids, prescription rates, and encounters with the highly potent fentanyl, which is increasingly being mixed with heroin and prescription opioids and has contributed to this dramatic rise in overdose deaths. The portal also offers information about overdose prevention, pain management guidance for health care providers and individuals, evidence-based strategies for states seeking to curb the opioid epidemic, and more.

Databases on Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health
GHELI repository link: http://repository.gheli.harvard.edu/repository/11269
This data portal, maintained by the World Health Organization (WHO), contains links to key databases on chronic disease and risk factors, mental health and substance abuse, suicide, and tobacco use.

Annual Prevalence of Use of Drugs in 2015 (or Latest Year Available)
This interactive map from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) presents the annual prevalence of drug use in 2015 or the late year available for specific countries. The data can be disaggregated by country and by drug group. The Interactive accompanies the World Drug Report 2017.

GHELI repository link: http://repository.gheli.harvard.edu/repository/11808
This report summarizes the latest information available for various health outcomes, health behaviors, and prescribing patterns related to the drug problem in the United States. This report covers latest data available on rates of opioid prescribing, substance use disorder, nonfatal hospitalizations and emergency department
visits, and overdose deaths. National information, and some state information, is presented to serve as a resource to help address the ongoing national problem of drug abuse, addiction, and overdose.

**Medicare Part D Opioid Prescribing Mapping Tool**


This data interactive from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) shares information about opioid prescribing rates based on Medicare Part D opioid prescription claims. Users can explore data at the state, country, and ZIP code levels, as well as see both the number and percentage of opioid claims in specific localities. The interactive map is based on 2013 and 2014 de-identified Medicare Part D claims.

**Trends in Opioid-Related Hospitalizations**


This data interactive from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality shares statistics and trends about opioid-related hospital care between 2009 and 2014. Data on hospitalizations in 2014 are disaggregated by patient age, sex, geographic area, and income.

**COUNTRY PROFILES AND FACT SHEETS**

**Information Sheet on Opioid Overdose**


This fact sheet from the World Health Organization provides information about opioid overdoses worldwide, outlining effects of opioids, physical symptoms of overdose, risk factors, and emergency responses to it. The fact sheet also highlights gaps in access to effective opioid dependence treatment as well as gaps in access to naloxone, a medication that can reverse opioid overdose.

**Palliative Care**


GHELI repository link: [http://repository.gheli.harvard.edu/repository/11808](http://repository.gheli.harvard.edu/repository/11808)

This fact sheet from the World Health Organization (WHO) provides information on the critical need, availability, and accessibility of palliative care around the world. Palliative care is an essential component of a comprehensive response to noncommunicable diseases, as outlined in the [WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013–2020](https://www.who.int/nhp/ncdp/determinants/palliativecare/en/). Yet, nearly 85 percent of people in need of palliative care do not receive it. In 2014, the first-ever global resolution on palliative care, [World Health Assembly Resolution WHA67.19](https://www.who.int/news-room/Fact-Sheets/detail/world-health-assembly-resolution-who-67-19), called upon the WHO and Member States to improve access to palliative care as a core component of health systems.

**County Profiles of Opioid Use and Related Outcomes**


These county-level profiles from the Indiana State Department of Health share detailed information about opioid use and related outcomes in the state. In 2015, Indiana experienced the worst HIV outbreak in state history, which many health officials attribute to intravenous drug use, state-level cuts to HIV testing, and reticence to needle exchange policies. The county profiles share the number and incidence rate of HIV, HCV, and STDs, as well as the total number and incidence rate for drug overdoses and deaths.
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Opioid Prescribing: Where You Live Matters
This fact sheet from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention highlights how opioid prescribing remains high and varies county to county in the United States. In particular, the highest prescribing counties prescribed six times more opioids per person than the lowest prescribing counties in 2015. Higher prescribing counties tended to be small cities or large towns, with a higher percentage of white residents, more uninsured or underemployed citizens, and more people with chronic conditions.

TOPIC PORTALS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Management of Substance Abuse
This topic portal from the World Health Organization highlights timely data, reports, research, and news associated with alcohol, drugs, and addictive behaviors and their implications for health and well-being.

Opioid Overdose
This topic portal from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shares information about opioid use, current, data, and overdose prevention efforts specific to the United States. The portal also shares up-to-date information regarding the CDC’s ongoing efforts to address the country’s opioid overdose epidemic and the most recent prescribing guidelines for the drug.

Opioid Policy Research Collaborative
The Opioid Policy Research Collaborative (OPRC) at Brandeis University’s Heller School for Social Policy and Management advances needed scholarship on public health interventions to address the opioid addiction epidemic. The OPRC focuses on providing timely research evaluate local, state, and national interventions and policies; offering evidence-based policy recommendations to address the crisis; convening stakeholders across disciplines to develop coordinated strategies addressing the epidemic; and sharing findings of specific innovations to broader, non-academic audiences.

Palliative Care
This topic portal from the Human Rights Watch includes reports, videos, and briefs that focus on the unmet need globally for palliative care and pain relief. Resources highlight the human rights implications of leaving pain untreated, particularly in the context of a global surge in chronic illnesses such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.

Palliative Care
This topic portal from the World Health Organization (WHO) provides key infographics, news, and reports focused on palliative care. Access to pain and symptom control is a part of the fundamental right to health, and resources in the topic portal address role of health systems and universal health coverage in achieving this vision.

Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance
GHELI repository link: http://repository.gheli.harvard.edu/repository/11184.
The Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance (WHPCA) is a global action network focusing exclusively on hospice and palliative care development worldwide. Its members are national and regional hospice and palliative care organizations and affiliate organizations supporting hospice and palliative care. The WHPCA is in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and co-produced the first *Global Atlas of Palliative Care at the End of Life*, mapping the unmet need worldwide. It defines palliative care, articulates why it is a human rights issue, and advocates for education and training, guidelines and policies, and integrated services and delivery models. WHPCA is the international arm for *ehospice*, an international palliative care news and information service.

**MULTIMEDIA AND NEWS**

**Heroin and the War on Drugs**  
This documentary shares the historical context of the “War on Drugs” in the United States and how it connects to the present-day opioid epidemic. During the 1970s, approaches to drug use focused on punitive, criminal justice approaches to targeting the heroin epidemic. These approaches disproportionately targeted lower income, black Americans and inflated the prison system. The documentary follows policy shifts over the last 40 years that have led to conceptualizing heroin addiction as a public health issue affecting white, rural populations. (14:00)

**The Problem of Pain**  
This news story depicts the challenges surrounding prescription pain medication. It shares personal narratives to illustrate how rich countries, like the United States, overprescribe pain medication which can lead to addiction and death. In contrast, developing countries have restrictive laws, limited knowledge, and strong stigma against pain medication. More work must be done to balance this discrepancy, by educating both doctors and patients on the disadvantages of pain medication over-use in rich countries, as well as the significant benefits of pain medication in developing countries.

**Trump Administration Declares Opioid Crisis a Public Health Emergency**  
This news story examines the current policy surrounding the U.S. opioid epidemic. In October 2017, President Trump declared the opioid epidemic as a public health emergency; however, it was not declared as a national emergency. This distinction means that new addiction treatments will not be receiving additional funding from the U.S. government—a worrying issue as the Public Health Emergency Fund is almost empty. There are still many questions on how the president will continue the plan for addressing opioids and how that plan will be funded.

**Faces of Fentanyl**  
This podcast explores fentanyl usage in Canada. In this episode, fentanyl users talk about addiction and family members share personal narratives of opioid use. Narratives touch on topics from opioid use in First Nations communities to paramedics using naloxone to reverse overdoses.
The Lancet Commission on Global Access to Palliative Care and Pain Relief
These infographics accompanying the Lancet Commission on Global Access to Palliative Care and Pain Relief depict the global inequity in access to pain medications, chart the unmet need of immediate-release morphine in developing countries, and illustrate the overall inequity in quality of palliative care. The infographics are located on the right hand side of the web portal.

The Family That Built an Empire of Pain
This news story in The New Yorker examines the Sackler family, whose fortune was built through the family business, Purdue Pharma. Purdue Pharma developed OxyContin, a heavily-marketed prescription painkiller that is now controversial due to its oversized role in the current opioid abuse epidemic. Many Americans have died from overdosing on OxyContin, and research by the American Society of Addiction Medicine suggests that the majority of people who use heroin initially began with prescription drugs. This news story takes a step back, to look at the inaccuracy in marketing to healthcare professionals and patients that led to opioid addiction across America.

The Opioid Epidemic in Six Charts
This news story depicts the opioid epidemic through six charts. These charts illustrate various trends in the opioid epidemic: the rise of opioid use in recent years, the overdose deaths from opioid use, demographic breakdown of opioid users, rise of fentanyl use, oxycodone consumption, and medication-assisted therapy for heroin addicts by age group.

The Opioid Epidemic, Explained
This news article explores the opioid epidemic in America, noting the steady increase in opioid use through recent years. This has been exacerbated by the lack of attention to addiction treatment and misleading marketing about the safety of prescription pain medication. The United States has the highest opioid consumption around the world, fueled by the combination of aggressive pharmaceutical marketing and increased pressure on doctors to treat pain more seriously. In addition to prescription painkillers, heroin and fentanyl pose a risk of addiction and overdose. The article underscores the need to educate individuals on the challenges of addiction as well as to make changes to policy in order to save lives and overcome this epidemic.

Medicaid’s Role in Addressing the Opioid Epidemic
This infographic illustrates the role of Medicaid in the opioid epidemic. Medicaid can help to control the opioid epidemic since it can cover low-income individuals who are fighting addiction and help them receive proper treatment. The infographic shows the challenges of the opioid epidemic and how broadened Medicaid coverage can address these challenges.

Playlist (11 Videos): Rx Awareness
This YouTube playlist by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shares personal video narratives of individuals who were affected by the opioid epidemic.
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Faces of an Epidemic
This photo essay from The New Yorker uses images to portray the problems of addiction and overdose on daily American life, focusing on the epidemic’s impact on Montgomery County, Ohio.

Opioid Overdose: Shareable Graphics
These infographics by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) illustrate recent trends in opioid use and prescription in the United States. One infographic shows how some states have decreased opioid prescription through the use of regulated pain clinics. Another shows how opioid prescriptions are still widespread, despite these recent regulations. The last infographic depicts the rise of fentanyl use and the increasing challenges associated with fentanyl overdose.

Opioid Epidemic Causing Rise in Hepatitis C Infections and Other Serious Illnesses
This news story explores the relationship between the opioid epidemic and rising rates of hepatitis C and HIV. These diseases interact with and exacerbate each other among vulnerable populations in what’s known as a syndemic or synergistic epidemic, increasing the public health burden on society. Mapping hotspots can help to measure disease burden to pinpoint locations with the most need and inform health policy decisions. Government and foundations will need to continue collaboration in order to educate physicians, pharmacists, and patients on hotspots, and increase disease testing, in order to address this health crisis.

TEACHING MATERIAL

Safe Needles Save Lives
GHELI repository link: http://repository.gheli.harvard.edu/repository/11469
This case highlights the harm reduction practices of providing clean needles and syringes to prevent the spread of blood-borne diseases among drug users in Ontario, Canada. It considers a needle exchange program effort in collaboration with a homeless prevention program that aimed to keep public areas free of discarded needles. When a six-year-old boy got a needle-stick injury in a public toilet in 2014, the resulting public panic sparked public discussion to improve existing efforts. The case helps students to understand project details and review the comparative landscape of community programs, policies, and activities related to needle/syringe disposal.

Investigating the Heroin and Prescription Opioid Epidemic: A Lesson Plan
GHELI repository link: http://repository.gheli.harvard.edu/repository/11764
This lesson plan from The New York Times explores the causes, effects, and potential solutions for addressing the prescription opioid crisis in the United States. The lesson includes a short film about an overdose survivor, relevant news articles to discuss within class, and a discussion guide for brainstorming possible solutions.
Policy Meets Practice – People Who Inject Drugs
GHELI repository link: http://repository.gheli.harvard.edu/repository/11738
This case study illustrates how a health policy for the treatment of infective endocarditis may increase health risks for persons with intravenous drug addictions. It follows an infectious disease physician in decision-making about aggressive antibiotic treatment for people who inject drugs (PWID) and may be homeless. The case would be suitable for use in health courses that consider clinical decision-making and the role of community health workers in addressing the health needs of persons with addictions or those facing socioeconomic challenges such as homelessness and domestic displacement.