

A Dignified Response: *Minimizing Encampments' Impact with Compassion*

Enrique Velázquez

Director of Regulatory Services, City of Minneapolis



The numbers

3,857 people experiencing homelessness

1,659 single adults

628 families

35.6% Hispanic, Latino, Chicano

35.9% Black, African American or African

29.5% White

11.3% American Indian or Alaskan Native

Barriers to Stable Housing

Sobriety

Eviction

Mental health

Economics

Criminal
convictions

COMBINATION
OF ALL

The faces

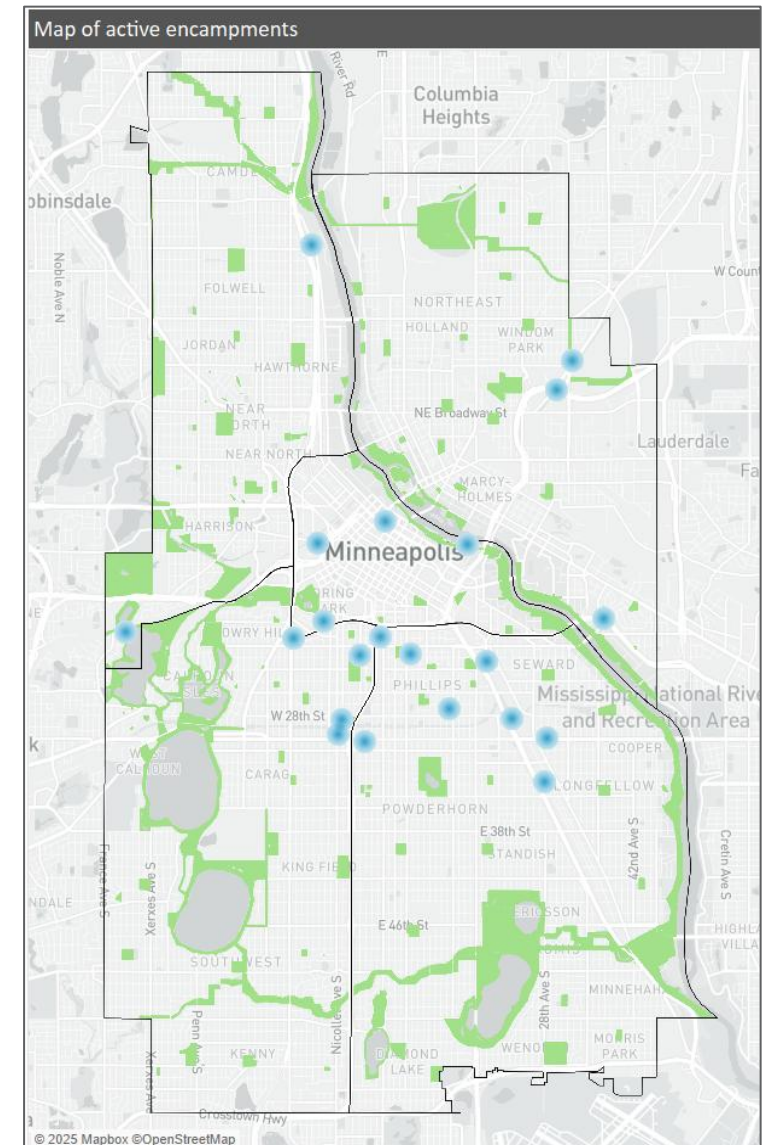
- **Forms** relationships
- **Builds** connections to services
- **Assists** in relocations
- **Speaks** multiple languages



Minneapolis Homeless Response Team

Unsheltered homelessness reducing locally

- **27%** reduction in unsheltered homelessness in Hennepin County from its peak in 2020
- Number of encampments remains stable, the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness decreases year over year



The approach: A multi-agency effort

County

- Is the lead agency for Continuum of Care
- Serves as direct provider of services
- Holds joint powers agreement for street outreach and rapid rehousing

Partner agencies

- Provide shelters and spaces with meals and showers
- Offer adult and youth drop-in or day services
- Host medical and mental health services
- Use opioid settlement dollars, including culturally specific treatment

City of Minneapolis

- Upholds regulations for minimum standards for safe & healthy housing
- Supports capital projects to help prevent and end homelessness
- Assists in infectious disease prevention, harm reduction, treatment, long-term recovery and culturally-specific services

To close or not to close?

FOUR risk factors to close an encampment:

1. Public Health Impacts
2. Public Safety/Life Safety Impacts
3. Community Livability Impacts
4. External/Environmental Impacts



The guiding beliefs points:

Everyone deserves dignified, safe and healthy housing.

Everyone experiencing unsheltered homelessness is vulnerable and deserves dignified and respectful treatment of their rights.

Every effort must be made to connect people to housing, shelter and services.

Encampments are a serious public health and safety risk, especially for those staying in the encampment, and are not a dignified form of shelter.