

Piloting Change

Roy's Journey to Stability

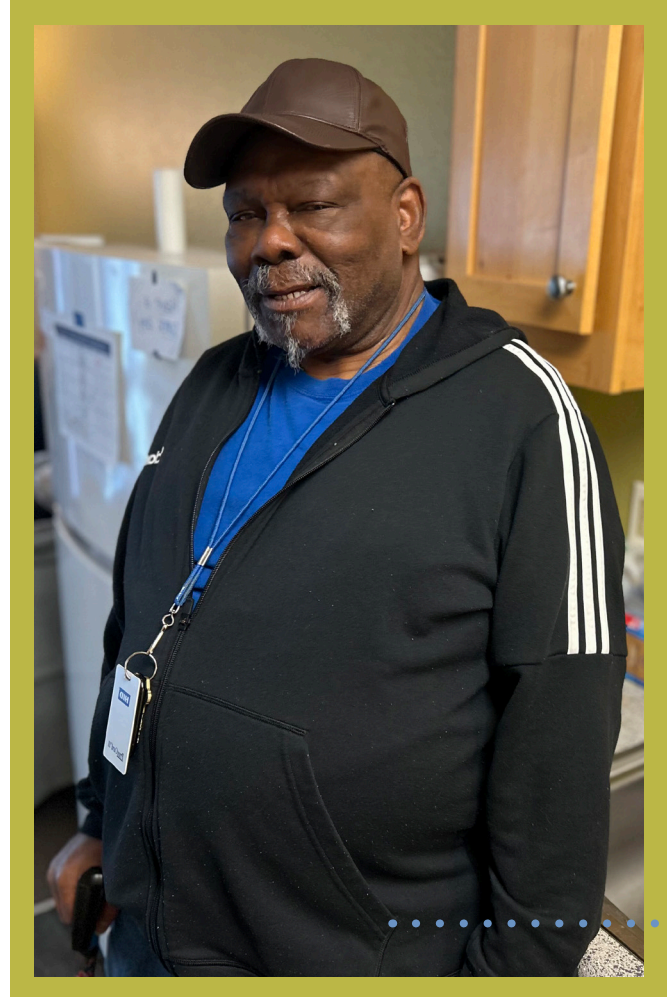
Roy moved his family to Portland from Los Angeles in 1971 after surviving the big earthquake in Southern California that year. Roy says when he first moved to Portland, the highest building in the city was five stories, and work was plentiful for a good iron worker. You can't look at the skyline of Portland without seeing buildings and bridges that Roy helped build.

Over the more than 30 years Roy worked, he followed jobs and family back to California, as well as to Texas, New Mexico, and Nevada. In 1997, while working on the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, Roy was injured during construction and became permanently disabled. Roy moved back to Portland, where a number of family members still lived, with the hope that he could recuperate and return to work.

For a number of years, Roy lived with his brothers, and then with his girlfriend, but when that relationship ended, he found himself without a place to live. Roy lived outdoors for a while, still convinced that he could figure it out himself. It was only after his second stroke that Roy got out the business card for Northwest Pilot Project that someone had given him at the hospital. Until then, "I have never been in a situation where I can't do for myself," Roy says.

Roy was connected to Madison, a Housing Case Manager at NWPP, who worked with Roy and with the staff at Chehalis Rehab Center to create a housing plan for Roy when he was ready for discharge. Madison helped Roy get on a number of housing waitlists, and gather the required documentation. After nine months in the rehab center, Roy's name came to the top of one of the waitlists, and he was ready to be discharged to his own place. It was a long wait for an apartment, but Roy says Madison was "always on his team" and kept him believing in the process.

When Roy first moved into his apartment, he had not yet



Roy enjoying the comforts of affordable housing

qualified for in-home care through Multnomah County's Aging, Disability and Veterans Services (ADVSD), but needed someone to help with housekeeping, meal preparation, and grocery shopping. NWPP was able to deliver these services over the course of several months through our Homecare Pilot Project, funded by CareOregon and ADVSD, while facilitating Roy's connection to ongoing in-home care. But Roy is dedicated to hard work, and he plans to increase his exercise to help get back as much of his independence as possible. For Roy, the first step in tending to his health is having an affordable apartment to call home.



From the
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Laura Golino de Lovato

For many of us who've had to care for an elderly parent we can resonate with what one of NWPP's donors recently shared with me in an email: *"You guys became my favorite nonprofit when I started taking care of my elderly mother. I couldn't even imagine her losing her housing while also dealing with the inevitable medical issues and everything else that goes along with aging."* But many of our clients don't have children or family members or even caregivers to help them as they age, especially those also experiencing homelessness. *That* is why we do this work.

Dear friends -

Hope has always been a core part of Northwest Pilot Project's vision and values, and a core feature of our service delivery. It's even part of our mission statement! We've all been in tough spots where a ray of hope was enough to keep us from giving up or falling into distress, and that's the same for the older adults in our community who we have the privilege of serving and supporting. Along with the array of services we provide, we also share hope for what we believe is something each of our clients deserves: safe, decent housing they can afford.

This year, we will need to double down on pairing hope with action to ensure that all of our clients' needs are met as this year brings many changes. While Northwest Pilot Project remains committed to a vision where all of our clients will have safe, decent permanent housing, there is a shift among funders and governments to go back to prioritizing short-term shelters as the first step to ending homelessness. We need all types of shelter to ensure that vulnerable people who are living outside have a warm and safe place to stay. But NWPP will always believe that it is housing that ends homelessness. And that means we need both shelter and permanent housing. We can't invest in shelter without also investing in permanent housing.

Laura

How can you help?

Donate! Help us fundraise for the Hootenanny and join us at the event on Sunday, May 4th. See page 4 for how you can get involved. Advocate for more resources and housing policies specifically for older adults. And don't lose hope!

The team at NWPP doesn't just hope - we take *action*.

Here's what we are working on this year:

- Expanding our advocacy work and spearheading key issue initiatives like system integration of housing and healthcare.
- One-site case management services at **two new Permanent Support Housing Projects** for older adults, both opening in Fall 2025.
- Advocating for **more funding for rent assistance** through collaboration and partnerships with nonprofits, governments, and philanthropy.
- Monitoring a ballot measure that will reform the Supportive Housing Services tax measure to provide better strategies and oversight, and most importantly **extend the measure until 2050**. Without this extension, many of our clients will lose rent assistance in five years.
- Most importantly, **housing our clients**. They are the most vulnerable in our community, and each of them deserves a safe, affordable home where they can age in place.

NWPP Advocacy Priorities:

Addressing Housing Needs and Enhancing Services

As NWPP's advocacy work has expanded, we have prioritized four key areas of work. This work, which builds on decades of advocacy work led by former NWPP Executive Director Susan Emmons and our late colleague Bobby Weinstock, is centered on the housing needs of our clients.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

NWPP will focus on the multiple issues that tie to housing affordability, from advocating for more long-term rental vouchers to working to increase utility reimbursement rates for our clients in subsidized housing. We'll also be advocating for increased housing production, and the intentional intersection between aging, disabilities, and the age friendly concept.

HOUSING ACCESS

While there is a new prioritization for shelters, NWPP will work to ensure that any new shelters are accessible for older adults. We'll continue working to reduce the barriers currently built into the rental housing screening process, such as credit and eviction history,

to ensure that all of our clients have a chance to get approved for housing. We will also work with our housing partners to speed up the lease up process once a client is approved for housing.

HEALTH AND HOUSING INTEGRATION

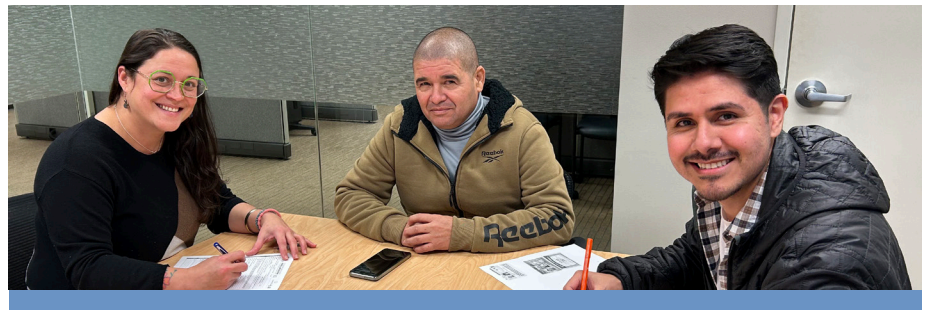
Access to health care services remains a priority for our clients. NWPP will continue to break down access barriers, and make it easier for both clients and NWPP case managers to get access to medical

providers, and additional funding for health related social needs services.

IN-HOME SERVICES

Thanks to the progress we've made in getting in-home services like housekeeping for our clients, NWPP will be addressing the larger issue of the shortage of home care workers, and the challenges in getting Medicaid service approvals for home care.

NWPP staff members assisting a client with application paperwork



NWPP Housing Forum

Our Invisible Neighbors: Understanding & Addressing Elder Homelessness



Panelists and presenters (from left to right): Walt Dawson, Yoni Kahn, Michael Parkhurst (moderator), Marisa Zapata, Paula Carder, and Marisa Espinoza

In October, NWPP hosted a paneled housing forum at Portland State University with a hybrid webinar. We packed the house and had 250 online registrants! Marisa Espinoza, former NWPP employee, presented findings from USCF's Benioff Homelessness & Housing Initiative, and the panel covered complex topics like policy, equity, and healthcare related to housing. NWPP will continue to provide informative forums to educate community stakeholders about the trends, challenges, and solutions related to our housing and homelessness crisis.

Join us for our next Housing Forum on Wednesday, April 23rd!

Watch the October 2024 forum at www.nwppilotproject.org/advocacy

Join Us for the Housing Seniors

Hootenanny



**Sunday,
May 4th - 1pm**

Oaks Amusement Park

It's Going to Be a HOOT!



Get ready for the **Housing Seniors Hootenanny** – our new event that has replaced the Walk-A-Thon! This is your chance to rally together, make a huge impact, and show your support for **NWPP's mission** to bring hope and dignity to low-income seniors through life-changing housing solutions. Let's make this an unforgettable celebration of compassion, action, and fun!

Get Ready to Make a BIG Impact - It's Easy, Fun, and FREE!

1. BECOME A VIRTUAL FUNDRAISER! It's as simple as clicking a button! Visit <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/hootenanny25/> to register, set up your fundraising page, and start spreading the word. Rally your community to donate generously all throughout April – every dollar makes a difference!

2. JOIN US FOR THE HOUSING SENIORS HOOTENANNY! Celebrate the amazing achievements of NWPP and all the incredible work made possible by YOU and all our supporters! Enjoy a delicious lunch, cheer on

our award winners, honor our top fundraisers, and participate in fun, family-friendly activities. This is an event you won't want to miss!

3. DO BOTH! Be a fundraiser AND attend the Hootenanny! It's the ultimate way to get involved and celebrate together. RSVP for the event at Oaks Park when you sign up as a fundraiser or by emailing us at rsvp@nwppilotproject.org. Let us know your name and how many adults and kids will be joining in on the fun! Or call us at 503-486-6518. Let's make this day unforgettable – *together!*

Our Virtual Fundraiser runs all throughout April!

Register TODAY so you don't miss out on information about our prizes, raffle tickets, and sponsorship opportunities!



DON'T FORGET! All attendees must RSVP. Bring your friends and family and support NWPP!

Housing Subsidies End Homelessness

People experience homelessness and housing instability for a variety of reasons. In providing housing services to older adults over the past fifty-five years, NWPP staff has learned that each person's path to our front door is specific to them. People may seek housing assistance after developing a chronic health condition (like Roy pg. 1), following the loss of a spouse, or after experiencing years of homelessness and needing a change. Each person has a unique set of circumstances that bring them to us, and the plans we create with them vary. But every single plan contains one shared element that is

always at the top of the list – housing that will be affordable to the person permanently.

Over the years, we have studied what creates long-term housing stability for our clients. It isn't a person's housing history or personal characteristics that predicts housing stability. Without fail, the most successful housing placements are the ones that include a housing subsidy, where rent is no more than 30% of the household income.

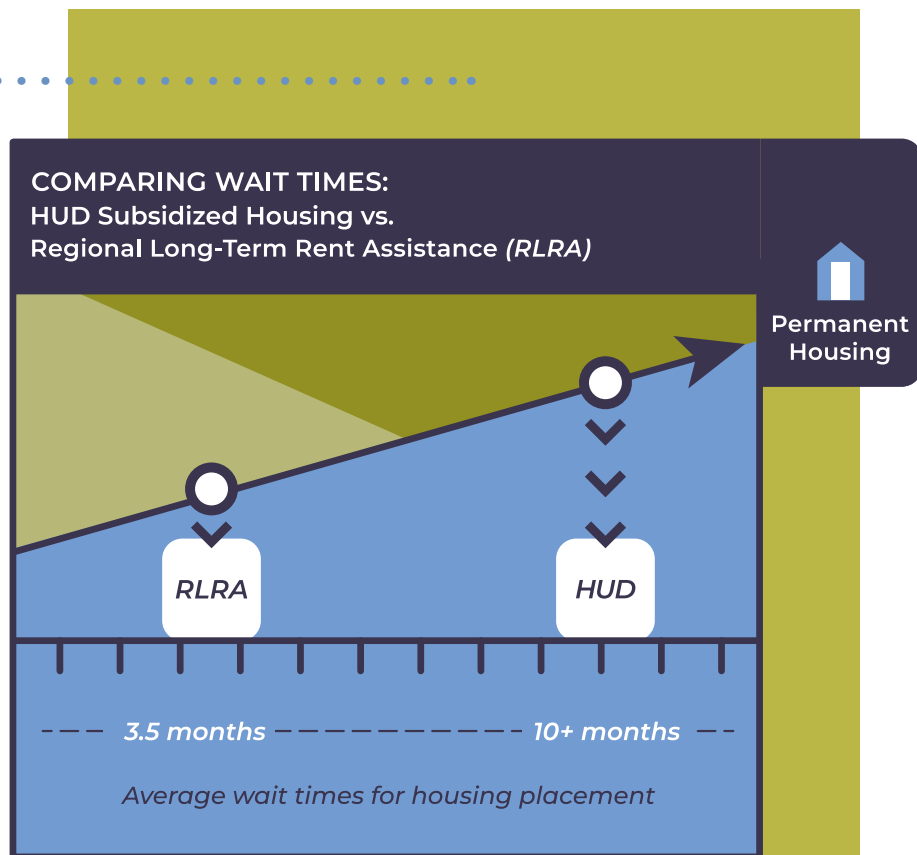
It makes sense. The average cost of an apartment exceeds the monthly income for nearly all of our clients

these days. If the average monthly rent for a studio apartment in Portland is \$1,200, and the typical monthly income for our clients is \$967, housing is simply not an option unless it includes an ongoing subsidy.

When a client comes to us seeking affordable housing, we have them apply for subsidized housing with open waiting lists as quickly as possible. This has been our strategy for years, and we keep doing it because it works. However, it can take years for people to reach the top of a waiting list and move into housing. Much of our work is spent helping people figure out how to safely survive the wait time.

Between November 2021 and July 2024, our Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) team received 38 tenant-based Regional Long-term Rental Assistance (RLRA) vouchers that were designed to provide permanent housing subsidies for older adults who had experienced long periods of homelessness, and faced a number of barriers to housing access. The PSH Case Managers were able to help 38 households move from homelessness to permanent housing within 3 and a half months, on average.

During the same timeframe, our Housing Case Management team, who did not have access to any RLRA vouchers, worked to move 120 clients from homelessness into permanent, subsidized housing using the existing affordable housing resources in our community. We measured, and on average, it took 10 months from our initial meetings to



when these clients were able to move into their permanent homes.

All of the studies and counts show that homelessness, especially for older adults, is growing in our community. If we want to change this trend, we need to move with a sense of urgency to create more affordable housing opportunities. We cannot move people into affordable housing that does not exist. If each of our housing case managers had an RLRA voucher for each of their clients, and it took approximately the same amount of time to utilize as for our PSH case managers, we could move people into housing nearly three times faster. Over the course of a year, we could stabilize 80 additional older adults in permanent housing; over the course of five years, we could stabilize an additional 403 older adults.

Permanent subsidies are expensive, but a bargain compared to the costs of homelessness on both the individuals experiencing it, and the community as a whole.

At NWPP, we see first-hand the cost of homelessness to individuals. People experiencing homelessness develop more chronic health issues, make more emergency room visits, and face more theft of property, violence, and contact with the legal system.

The costs to the individuals add up for the community as well. People experiencing homelessness are more likely to access expensive health care services, like emergency rooms and hospitalizations. Homelessness results in health care issues that require more long-term and costly care. People experiencing homelessness are more likely to

spend time in jail and prison. And emergency shelter is an expensive alternative to affordable housing. Researchers have found that it costs more than \$40,000 a year for each person experiencing chronic homelessness to remain without housing.

When you consider the cost of homelessness to our neighbors and to our community, the cost of a housing voucher seems a bargain. In 2023, the average monthly cost of a housing voucher in Multnomah

County was \$998 per household, or just under \$12,000 for the whole year.

Imagine what would happen if we decided to end homelessness by creating quick paths to housing that is actually affordable to people on fixed incomes. Housing subsidies not only end homelessness—they give people the stability they need to rebuild their lives, improve their health, and contribute to our community.

Monthly Rent Cost in Various Housing for Person(s) on SSI Income		
TYPE OF SUBSIDY	RENT COST	WAIT TIME
Tax Credit Housing	\$700-\$1,500	1-6 months
HUD Subsidized Housing	\$270 max	1-3 years
Housing Choice Project-Based Voucher	\$270 max	1-3 years
Regional Long-Term Rent Assistance	\$270 max	Available only to participants in select projects
Housing Choice Tenant-Based Voucher (Section 8)	\$270 max	Waiting list CLOSED until further notice (Opens appx. every 5 yrs.)
68% of NWPP clients have incomes at or below the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) level of \$967/month		



**NORTHWEST
PILOT PROJECT**

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NWPP Welcomes New Electric Van to Support Client Services

Thanks to funding from the PGE Drive Change Fund
and the Oregon DEQ's Clean Fuels Program!

If you see us around town, give us a wave!

Join Us for the Housing Seniors
Hootenanny
Sunday, May 4th, 1pm



See pages 4 and 5 for details